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The Journal of Religion

Volume 95, Number 3, July 2015

Articles

- 295 Heidegger's Kierkegaard: Philosophy and Religion in the Tracks of a Failed Interpretation
NOREEN KHAWAJA
- 318 We in Our Turmoil: Theological Anthropology through Maria Montessori and the Lives of Children
NATALIE CARNES
- 337 Wittgenstein's Web: Hans Frei and the Meaning of Biblical Narratives
JOHN ALLAN KNIGHT
- 361 After the Quotidian Turn: Interpretive Categories and Scholarly Trajectories in the Study of Religion since the 1960s
THOMAS A. TWEED

Book Reviews

- 386 Joy Schroeder, *Deborah's Daughters: Gender Politics and Biblical Interpretation*
ELIZABETH HAYES ALVAREZ
- 388 Yvonne Sherwood, *Biblical Blaspheming: Trials of the Sacred for a Secular Age*
TIMOTHY J. SANDOVAL
- 389 Nili Wazana, *All the Boundaries of the Land: The Promised Land in Biblical Thought in Light of the Ancient Near East*
STEPHEN C. RUSSELL
- 391 Isabelle Bochet, ed., *Augustin, philosophe et prédicateur: Hommage à Goulven Madec; Actes du colloque international organisé à Paris les 8 et 9 septembre 2011*
WILLEMIEN OTTEN
- 393 Michael Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis*
WILLEMIEN OTTEN
- 394 Daphne Hampson, *Kierkegaard: Exposition and Critique*
CRAIG HINKSON

- 396 Kyle Harper, *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*
BENJAMIN H. DUNNING
- 398 Bob Tennant, *Corporate Holiness: Pulpit Preaching and the Church of England Missionary Societies, 1760–1870*
BRIAN STANLEY
- 399 Denys Turner, *Thomas Aquinas: A Portrait*
WILLEMEN OTTEN
- 401 Jason David BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichean Dilemma*, vol. 2, *Making a "Catholic" Self, 388–401 C.E.*
FREDERICK VAN FLETEREN
- 403 Marie Cartier, *Baby, You Are My Religion: Women, Gay Bars, and Theology Before Stonewall*
LINN MARIE TONSTAD
- 404 Charlton, James, *Non-dualism in Eckhart, Julian of Norwich and Traherne: A Theopoetic Reflection*
RACHEL SMITH
- 406 Matthew Drever, *Image, Identity, and the Forming of the Augustinian Soul*
JAMES WETZEL
- 408 William Hasker, *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God*
SAMEER YADAV
- 410 Kenneth Rose, *Pluralism: The Future of Religion*
FRANCIS X. CLOONEY
- 412 Joseph J. Godfrey, *Trust of People, Words, and God: A Route for Philosophy of Religion*
RONNEY MOURAD
- 413 Reid B. Locklin, *Liturgy of Liberation: A Christian Commentary on Shankara's 'Upadeśasāhasrī'*
EDWARD T. ULRICH
- 415 Milad Milani, *Sufism in the Secret History of Persia*
AMIN SADR
- 417 Emma Anderson, *The Death and Afterlife of the North American Martyrs*
CHRISTOPHER VECSEY
- 418 Meredith Marie Neuman, *Jeremiah's Scribes: Creating Sermon Literature in Puritan New England*
JENNIFER GRABER
- 420 Christian Smith, Kyle Longest, Jonathan Hill, and Kari Christoffersen, *Young Catholic America: Emerging Adults In, Out of, and Gone from the Church*
TIM CLYDESDALE

- 422 Jason E. Vickers, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to American Methodism*
DAVID HOLLAND
- 424 John Drury, *Music at Midnight: The Life and Poetry of George Herbert*
JENNIFER G. JESSE
- 425 Peter Gardella, *American Civil Religion: What Americans Hold Sacred*
JOHN HOWELL
- 427 B. H. McLean, *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics*
BRIAN BRITT
- 429 Sonu Shamdasini, *C. G. Jung: A Biography in Books*
JEREMY BILES
- 431 Paul Eli Ivey, *Radiance from Halcyon: A Utopian Experiment in Religion
and Science*
CHRISTOPHER WHITE

Heidegger's Kierkegaard: Philosophy and Religion in the Tracks of a Failed Interpretation*

Noreen Khawaja / Yale University

As an interpreter of other philosophers, Heidegger is not known for his generosity. The hermeneutic principle that won him this reputation is first formulated in explicit terms in an introductory remark to his 1930 essay on Plato: "The 'doctrine' of a thinker is that which, within what is said, remains unsaid."¹ In his preface to the 1967 collection that made this essay famous, Heidegger expands upon this idea, grounding it in a theory of the conditions of thought itself: "Whoever sets out on a path of thinking knows least about that defining issue—at once behind him and over beyond him—toward which he is moved." Such a thinker, he continues, "will yield to the necessity of being understood differently later than he thought to understand himself."² These remarks articulate the reasoning behind a technique that Heidegger had been practicing from his earliest efforts in philosophy: even the greatest of thinkers cannot perceive the forces that drive her work; the genuine understanding of these forces, and of the meaning of the work itself, remains the task of later philosophy.

Heidegger's lifelong implementation of this idea has been the subject of both ardent praise and blistering criticism. As a way of looking at the Western philosophical canon from the vantage point of contemporary concerns and problems, it quickly became paradigmatic, inspiring a long and consequential stream of motivated "re-readings"? of the philosophical tradition from Gadamer to Deleuze. Yet in spite of its contentiousness, this method

* The idea for this article emerged from the sage and steady encouragement of Brent Sockness. Without his careful eye, or the generous thoughtful critiques of Thomas Sheehan and Van Harvey, it would not have been possible.

¹ Martin Heidegger, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill and trans. Thomas Sheehan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 155, and *Gesamtausgabe* [GA], ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, 102 vols. (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975–), 9:203.

² GA 9:vii; translation is mine here and throughout unless otherwise noted.

of reading is so central and so explicit in Heidegger's work that it has now become familiar. It is the standard caveat with which so many examinations of Heidegger's interpretations of the history of philosophy begin. It was the first sentence of this very essay, and no one familiar with the work of either thinker would have been surprised to see it there. Heidegger's transgressive style of reading is still debated, but it no longer shocks.

A more elusive type of problem appears, however, when we consider one of the few major influences that Heidegger never criticized in this way: Søren Kierkegaard. Heidegger's early thought was steeped in Kierkegaard. *Being and Time* transposes entire paragraphs from the German translation of Kierkegaard's *Concept of Anxiety* under the umbrella of a more formal phenomenological analysis of human experience.³ Yet both in *Being and Time* and throughout his career, Heidegger's explicit discussions of Kierkegaard are limited to the margins (footnotes, prefaces, transitional passages, and unpublished correspondence). In the relatively rare moments of acknowledgment, Heidegger tends to credit Kierkegaard as an *Anstoß*, or "impetus," a tepid credit often chased with a strong *aber*.⁴ As Patricia Huntington put it in 1995, "Heidegger's *Being and Time*, long considered one of the pathbreaking works of the twentieth century, offers us an ambiguous legacy. This is nowhere more evident than in the question of Heidegger's relation to Kierkegaard."⁵ More recently, a number of scholars have taken on the task of rooting out the implicit signs of Kierkegaard's influence, often bracketing the explicit puzzle of Heidegger's remarks as a kind of biographical anecdote, an allergic reaction to the modish "Kierkegaardianism" of the age.⁶

In what follows, I take the opposite approach. By an examination of the full range of Heidegger's explicit discussions of Kierkegaard, we will find a new and more complex characterization than emerged from the overindulged footnotes in *Being and Time*.⁷ What we find instead is a hyperbolic and often

³ For a detailed analysis of the parallels, see Vincent McCarthy, "Martin Heidegger: Kierkegaard's Influence Hidden and in Full View," in *Kierkegaard and Existentialism*, ed. Jon Stewart (Farnham: Ashgate 2011), 95–125.

⁴ GA 63:30, 8:216.

⁵ Patricia J. Huntington, "Heidegger's Reading of Kierkegaard Revisited: From Ontological Abstraction to Ethical Concretion," in *Kierkegaard in Post/Modernity*, ed. Martin J. Matušík and Merold Westphal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 43.

⁶ See, e.g., Charles Guignon, "Heidegger and Kierkegaard on Death: The Existentiell and the Existential," in *Kierkegaard and Death*, ed. Patrick Stokes and Adam J. Buben (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 184–203; Vincent A. McCarthy, "Martin Heidegger: Kierkegaard's Influence Hidden and in Full View," in *Kierkegaard's Influence on Existentialism*, ed. Jon Stewart (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 95–125; and Clare Carlisle, "Kierkegaard and Heidegger," in *The Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard*, ed. John Lippitt and George Pattison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 421–39.

⁷ Without offering a systematic interpretation of the influence, a few recent scholars have made significant strides in grasping its scope. See esp. Heiko Schulz, "A Modest Head Start: The German Reception of Kierkegaard," in *Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, ed. Jon Stewart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 8:307–420; and Gerhard Thonhauser's very helpful study, *Über das Konzept der Zeitlichkeit bei Søren Kierkegaard mit ständigem Hinblick auf Martin Heidegger* (Munich: Alber, 2011).

contradictory image: Kierkegaard as a "pathbreaker" more original than any other in his generation, but stuck in Hegelian metaphysics, whose work is so unclassifiable that it constitutes an untapped detour within the history of metaphysics, but also a Christian thinker who belongs to the past. As I will argue, the erratic, extreme, and often superficial character of these remarks, once brought into focus, actually tells us something more than what Heidegger really thought of Kierkegaard; it betrays the fact that the figure of Kierkegaard frequently served as the cipher for a deeper and more systematic concern, namely, how to circumscribe the role that religious thought ought to play in philosophical inquiry. Heidegger would try and fail, as I will argue, to read Kierkegaard's religious authorship as yet another chapter in the larger history of metaphysics. We will examine the failure of Heidegger's reading by looking at what it gets wrong about Kierkegaard but also by considering the frequency with which Heidegger changes his opinion and approach to the Danish thinker. Where Kierkegaard, for his part, had already begun troubling the metaphysical tradition on his own, Christian-religious terms, Heidegger developed a systematic critique of metaphysics that was so deeply un-Christian that it was supposed to lie outside the entire distinction between the Christian and the secular. As Heidegger tries to transpose his critique of metaphysics onto his reading of Kierkegaard, a kind of analytical hysteria surrounding the relation of philosophical critique to Christian theology appears. In the central part of this article, I will discuss the major fault lines in Heidegger's interpretation of Kierkegaard. At the end of this discussion, however, I will also suggest how the cracks in this interpretation might help us to identify a few of the deeper methodological problems in Heidegger's critique of metaphysics and his attempt to get beyond Christianity.

"ACTUALLY STILL A THEOLOGIAN"

As a young scholar who turned to philosophy after a rigorous and formative theological education and who at one point contemplated becoming a priest, Heidegger was, despite his evident talent, perceived with a modicum of suspicion by his fellow philosophers. Husserl celebrated the loosening of his protégé's personal ties to Catholicism in the late teens, only to professionally consign Heidegger to the role of "phenomenologist of religion."⁸

⁸ See the line from Husserl's letter to Heidegger in 1918, sent while Heidegger was on the front: "Thus each to his own as if the salvation of the world depended upon it alone, and so I in philosophy and you as weatherman and in the side job of phenomenologist of religion" (Heidegger served as a weatherman in World War I). Quoted in John Van Buren's *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 145. For a brief but helpful discussion of this, see Otto Pöggeler, "Heideggers Weg von Luther zu Hölderlin," in *Heidegger und die christliche Tradition: Annäherungen an ein schwieriges Thema*, ed. Norbert Fischer and Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Hamburg: Meiner, 2007), 167–88, esp. 173–78.

As Heidegger saw it, this meant that his primary task was to undertake an application and extension of Husserlian phenomenology (what Husserl called “regional ontology”); it was not to redefine the method and focus of phenomenology itself, not to think phenomenology, as Husserl had done, as “first philosophy.” “I myself,” Heidegger reports to Karl Löwith in 1920, “am already no longer even regarded as a ‘philosopher,’ I am ‘actually still a theologian.’”⁹

Heidegger dealt with this challenge by inverting the paradigm. Instead of philosophizing about religion, he would tap records of early Christian religious experience as a source for philosophy itself, as the material on the basis of which he would draw out the lines of a new approach to first philosophy: a visceral phenomenology that dealt with the guts of experience and not simply the mind. He turned the impassioned reflectivity of Paul, Luther, Augustine, and Kierkegaard—his primary religious interlocutors in the period—into attestations of an unthematized phenomenology that posed powerful challenges to the approach of his mentor. The meaning of early Christian religious experience was not simply waiting for the arrival of a philosophical narrator from 1920s Freiburg in order to be determined; it had its own voice and, as Heidegger saw it, formulated aspects of the human condition from which even twentieth-century Freiburgers stood much to learn.

This repositioning of religious discourse as a productive voice within philosophy made Heidegger understandably intriguing for the theologians of his day. Rudolf Bultmann, the theologian with whom Heidegger had the most intimate and sustained relationship, spent no little effort trying to facilitate an encounter between Heidegger and his theological colleagues, particularly Friedrich Gogarten and Karl Barth.¹⁰ Heidegger showed inter-

⁹ Letter dated October 20, 1920, cited in Theodore Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan, eds., *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of his Early Occasional Writings, 1910–1927* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 368. A second major problem with this role, as Heidegger discovered during his abortive effort to teach philosophy of religion in Freiburg, was that most of the students in his philosophy seminars knew next to nothing about theology or the “religious phenomena” they were supposed to be theorizing. Another letter to Löwith, dated September 13, 1920, refers to this ignorance as the reason for changing the theme of his planned seminar from Christianity to Aristotle: “Since I would like to learn something myself from seminars, through objections and difficulties, and these arise only with the requisite sharpness if the participants themselves are up to the matter at hand, I have for the time being forsaken my seminar on the philosophy of religion—for it would be fair to say that in fact only prattle about the philosophy of religion issues from this, the kind that I would like to eradicate out of philosophy, this chatter about the religious, which one knows from reference books. . . . For this reason I am resolved on Aristotelian metaphysics” (I thank Hermann Heidegger for permitting me to study, translate, and cite from his full facsimile collection of Heidegger’s correspondence with Löwith, the bulk of which remains unpublished).

¹⁰ For a string of Bultmann’s recommendations of Heidegger to Gogarten, see Rudolf Bultmann and Friedrich Gogarten, *Briefwechsel 1921–1967*, ed. Hermann Götz Göckeritz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002) 56, 63, 81, 84, 96. For a similar story with Karl Barth, see Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, *Briefwechsel 1922–1966*, ed. Bernd Jaspert (Zürich: Theologischer, 1971), 31, 33, 42.

est at first, but soon enough firmly decided against the connection, referring to Barth as an “explosion with much debris and smoke” and to the enterprise of dialectical theology itself as a “specter.”¹¹ Heidegger’s distance from the “dialectical theologians”—who were among the first German intellectuals to engage with the only recently translated works of Kierkegaard—is in itself relevant to the present study. “I was already confronting the works of Kierkegaard,” Heidegger remarks in his 1928 course on logic, “when there was yet no dialectical literature.”¹² This is Heidegger’s attempt to position his own interest in Kierkegaard defensively, to disconnect it from the theological literature that had made the Dane so famous in the first decades of the twentieth century.

The growing recognizability of terms like *Existenzphilosophie* and *Existentialismus* also troubled Heidegger insofar as they seemed to represent a philosophical movement placing him in the close company of Kierkegaard, Jaspers, and later Sartre. In a letter to Jaspers in 1928, he summarizes this view impatiently: “How often have I read that I am the actual synthesis of Dilthey and Husserl—which others had planned long ago—with a few spices thrown in from Kierkegaard and Bergson.”¹³ The problem here is not just Heidegger’s uniform contempt for intellectual fashions: “The expression ‘existentialism’ is today beginning to become common,” Heidegger observes in a course from the same year. “For the most part this existentialism has a religious emphasis; its decisive advance takes place through a certain kind of renewal of Kierkegaardian thought.”¹⁴ Thus to be called an existentialist is to be surreptitiously associated with a religious renewal of Kierkegaard.

THE ERRATIC CHARACTER OF HEIDEGGER’S REMARKS

Heidegger was clearly less forthcoming about his debt to Kierkegaard than he ought to have been. Yet the most troubling aspect of Heidegger’s refer-

¹¹ Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Heidegger, *Briefwechsel 1925–1975* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2009), 22. See also GA 94:51, where Heidegger describes dialectical theology as “Protestant Jesuitism of a most sickly observance.”

¹² Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 141, and GA 26, 178.

¹³ Walter Biemel and Hans Saner, eds., *The Heidegger-Jaspers Correspondence (1920–1963)*, trans. Gary E. Aylesworth (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2003), 102. This problem of existence as a theme connecting Heidegger with Kierkegaard and *Existenzphilosophie* more generally is a recurrent one. See also his 1941 “Sketches for the History of Being as Metaphysics,” where Heidegger attempts to distinguish his concept of existence from that of his predecessors: “In play here is neither Kierkegaard’s concept nor that of *Existenzphilosophie*. Existence is rather thought . . . in its distinctive relation to the truth of being. . . . The question only serves to prepare for an overturning of metaphysics. All this stands outside of *Existenzphilosophie* and existentialism and remains abysmally distinct from the essentially theological passion of Kierkegaard; it holds itself, by contrast, in the essential confrontation with metaphysics” (GA 6.2, 476–77).

¹⁴ GA 27:374. In a section from his 1941 lecture course on German Idealism, Heidegger makes an extended statement in response to the question of why his “analytic of existence” should not be understood as *Existenzphilosophie*. See GA 49:30–31.

ences to Kierkegaard is neither their scarcity nor their want of grace.¹⁵ The basic problem—and the most interesting one—is that they seem to run in every direction at once. Heidegger rushes to appraise Kierkegaard philosophically, religiously, and even temperamentally. That many of these appraisals are cast in a negative tone is a false commonality threatening to conceal the fact that the remarks most often do not agree about *what* Kierkegaard's project and perspective seem to have gotten wrong—which is to say, philosophically speaking, that they do not agree at all. Despite having rather famously criticized the prevalent practice of comparing Kierkegaard with Nietzsche, Heidegger puts the two together himself on a fairly regular basis, at one point claiming that they are the nineteenth century's "great vigilantes and pathbreakers,"¹⁶ at another point describing the pair as exhibiting together a kind of liminal thinking at the edge of philosophy that we simply cannot seem to take seriously enough [*die wir nicht ernst genug nehmen können*].¹⁷ In a short speech from 1934, Heidegger even refers to Kierkegaard, along with Nietzsche and Hegel, as one of the "three greatest thinkers" of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ A more substantive example of this fluctuation occurs when Heidegger tries to appraise Kierkegaard's concept of time, which was widely regarded to be influential for Heidegger. In 1927, Heidegger describes Kierkegaard's discovery of "existential time"—that is, a time whose most decisive measure is not the hour or the day but the "moment of vision" (*Øjeblik*)—as remaining trapped in a "vulgar" concept of time based on a series of "now-points" and thereby not penetrating to the primordial, existential structure of human temporality.¹⁹ Just a year or so later, however, Heidegger makes a complete about-face, now seeing in Kierkegaard's moment of vision "nothing like a now-point" but rather the name for a breakdown within time that issues "from the essence of time itself."²⁰ What we find in so many of these passages on Kierkegaard is a continual oscillation between intense admiration and hasty dismissal.

The one topic that does appear nearly without exception in Heidegger's discussions is that of Kierkegaard's Christianity. Can Kierkegaard be a religious writer and also a philosopher? If the answer is No, does that make him a theologian? Whether he mentions Kierkegaard in a passing parenthesis or devotes an entire section to him, Heidegger tries with almost obsessive

¹⁵ Many comparisons of Kierkegaard and Heidegger have focused on the issues driving each thinker's work, while paying no more than marginal attention to the textual and biographical history behind Heidegger's actual reception of the Danish thinker. Where Heidegger's statements about Kierkegaard are included in the analysis, the dominant tendency has been to recycle the same handful of passages again and again: the three largely dismissive footnotes from *Being and Time*, a passing comment in Heidegger's 1943 lecture course on Nietzsche (GA 5:249), and another remark made in the 1952 lecture series, *What Is Called Thinking?* (GA 8:216).

¹⁶ GA 36/37:13.

¹⁷ GA 32:19.

¹⁸ GA 16:317.

¹⁹ GA 2:447n.

²⁰ GA 29/30:225–26.

force to describe, question, and problematize the complex disciplinary status of Kierkegaard's thought. Hailed in a 1921 essay on Jaspers for his "heightened consciousness of methodological rigor such as has rarely been achieved in philosophy or theology,"²¹ by 1941 Kierkegaard finds himself excommunicated from both spheres, left with the undecorated title of "religious thinker," belonging neither to theology nor to philosophy.²² In 1943, Kierkegaard is again redefined; in contrast to Nietzsche the metaphysician, he is now merely a "religious writer," one who can no longer even rightly be called a "thinker."²³ Between these two poles, we find but further discord. Heidegger's assessment of Kierkegaard in a 1923 lecture course is worth noting for its rare conventionality: "He was a theologian and stood within the realm of faith, in principle outside of philosophy."²⁴ In his 1941 sketch for a lecture course on Nietzsche, however, he says that Kierkegaard "was neither a theologian nor a metaphysician but what is essential from both of these."²⁵

If Heidegger's aim in 1921 was to immunize Kierkegaard against the association with Jaspers, the aim of later remarks seems to be to immunize his own philosophy, and particularly his use of Nietzsche, against the association with Kierkegaard. It is in the thirties, under the influence of Nietzsche, that Heidegger begins to identify "Judeo-Christian" ideas about God as creator of man as a relatively cohesive intensification of Greek metaphysics.²⁶ It is probable that Heidegger's vacillating appraisals of Kierkegaard's religious identity reflect, at least to some degree, the complexities of Kierkegaard's own authorship. Heidegger appears to be one of the first of Kierkegaard's readers both to have appreciated the philosophical richness of the "upbuilding" writings, and to have grasped the significance of the pseudonyms.²⁷

Heidegger's remarks do not diverge in a progressive fashion. The variance between them cannot be ascribed to increasing suspicion or appreciation. Where we can describe a consistent development in Heidegger's

²¹ Martin Heidegger, "Comments on Jaspers's *Psychology of Worldviews*," in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill, trans. John van Buren (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 35, and GA 9:41.

²² GA 49:19. A notebook from the same year describes Kierkegaard as a "Christian thinker"; GA 96:215.

²³ GA 5:249. By this point the term "thinker" has acquired the status of a technical term for Heidegger. It generally refers only to one who thinks about the fundamental question of metaphysics: the meaning of "the being of what is."

²⁴ Heidegger, *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, trans. John van Buren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 25, and GA 63:30.

²⁵ GA 6.2:472.

²⁶ GA 6.1:136, 65:126, 411, 66:28–29, 39, 328.

²⁷ In his 1942 lecture course on Parmenides, for example, Heidegger refers to Kierkegaard's use of pseudonymity as demonstrating something crucial about the "essence of *ψεῦδος*," or falsity, which is an obscuring that also lets something appear (GA 54, 53). He also observes the "essential connection" between *Philosophical Fragments* and *Training in Christianity*, insofar as "the first bears the authorial name of Johannes Climacus while the second is published by Anti-Climacus" (GA 54, 54). The notoriously flippant claim, in one of the footnotes of *Being and Time*, that Kierkegaard's upbuilding discourses were more philosophically productive than much of the pseudonymous literature, is reinforced emphatically in a notebook entry from 1941 (GA 96:215–16).

interpretation, however, is on the level of context. The twenties offer Heidegger a number of different reasons to draw on Kierkegaard—as a way to criticize Jaspers, as a representative of the best and most creative aspects of Christian religiosity, or as a way to sharpen his own budding analytic of existence. After *Being and Time*, however, Heidegger invokes Kierkegaard almost exclusively as a point of interest in his analysis of the history of philosophy (which always functions at the same time as a philosophical critique of history). It is Kierkegaard's uncertain role in this grand story that will help us to see most clearly the stakes of Heidegger's reading.

LOST IN THE HISTORY OF BEING

That the references to Kierkegaard occur in connection with assessments about sweeping movements in philosophical and intellectual history will bring little surprise to those familiar with Heidegger's work. It was one of Heidegger's long-standing aims to gain an understanding of the tasks of philosophy, not only conceived ideally in terms of the questions that philosophy—seen in terms of its essential and unchanging character—should be asking and the methods that ought to belong to it but also conceived historically as a tradition both burdened and empowered by its own history.

This interest in philosophical history differs from the history of philosophy as practiced in most philosophy faculties today. Even from the earliest stages of his career, Heidegger is in search of a new beginning for philosophy—quite literally, a philosophical conversion on the broadest possible scale. This search, as he conceives it, requires that he first obtain a fresh and yet utterly penetrating grasp of the contemporary philosophical situation—which is nothing other than the position into which all prior philosophy has delivered him. In the twenties this grasp is shaped profoundly by Husserl's view of philosophy as the unexplored foundation of all the sciences. Heidegger, too, described his own work as a "fundamental ontology" whose primary task is to explicate the overlooked but ever-operative conditions of existence.²⁸ Philosophy, as this "fundamental" science, would be decisive not only for all the other branches of knowledge (both applied and theoretical) but for human action and reflection themselves. Heidegger will later come to imagine his departure from prior philosophy in different terms, namely, as a departure from the all-encompassing tradition of Western thought as inherently ontotheological, as metaphysics. Whereas metaphysics defaults on the ultimate questionability of being by referring what is to some ultimate and discrete principle or being (be that God, spirit, or the will to power), phenomenology's job is to ask fundamental questions about being while leaving that particular question open.²⁹ In insisting on the radi-

²⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 34–35, and *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967), 13–14.

²⁹ See, e.g., GA 6.2:470.

cal questionability of being, philosophy prepares the way for a new, post-metaphysical "beginning" for Western culture.³⁰

Whether we are talking about the Heidegger of fundamental ontology or of postmetaphysical thinking, however, the drive to situate his predecessors in relation to the project he understands to be most necessary remains constant. It is hardly possible for Heidegger to mention another thinker, even parenthetically, without also commenting on his position vis-à-vis the wide-ranging developments of Western thought. Augustine, Luther, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, the Neo-Kantians—each has a determinate and decisive place in the unfolding of the history of philosophy stretching from classical Athenian responses to pre-Platonic philosophy all the way through Nietzsche, and Heidegger wastes no opportunity to reinforce this point.

Through the early twenties, Heidegger's way of placing Kierkegaard in history is either simply to name him as a member of various traditions (Christianity, German Idealism) or, in its maximally critical form, to say that "even Kierkegaard" did not find his way out of the limits of those traditions.³¹ In the 1919 *Grundprobleme*, Kierkegaard is described as one of the "formidable eruptions" that occurs from time to time in Christianity, which undermines Christianity's problematic appropriation of certain aspects of ancient science, and allows it to access once again the radical discovery of the "world of the self" (*Selbstwelt*) that characterized early Christian lived experience.³² In 1923, as he begins to identify Kierkegaard more and more with Hegel, Heidegger writes that in the New Testament and with Augustine, there is an (implicit) attempt to give a new, non-Platonic meaning to truth, and that while it was the task of theology to explicate this implicit, even inchoate attempt, theology failed to do so, and "even Kierkegaard's 'paradox' is nothing but the result of this fundamental failure to interpret the idea of truth."³³

Yet as Heidegger grows more critical of Kierkegaard, his claims become more divergent. One more or less sustained thread in these passages, from the very earliest to the very last, however, is the overall weakness of Kierkegaard's interpreters (Jaspers at the top of the list). With a fresh and steady stream of translations and studies since around 1910, Kierkegaard scholarship had been expanding rapidly in Germany, and Heidegger's disdain for it was palpable. Citing the first German publication of Kierkegaard's *Gesammelte Werke* by Diderichs, Heidegger himself describes Kierkegaard as being "manifoldly influential" in Germany since the turn of the century.³⁴ To begin with, Heidegger made continued attempts to distinguish Kierkegaard from the likes of contemporary "existentialists" such as Jaspers,

³⁰ The term *Anfang* (beginning) pervades Heidegger's writings after *Being and Time*, particularly in the late thirties and early forties. Many of Heidegger's most direct comments about this beginning have been gathered together in GA 70 (*Über den Anfang*).

³¹ Excerpt from letter from Heidegger to Karl Löwith dated September 13, 1920.

³² GA 58:205.

³³ GA 17:126.

³⁴ GA 49:19.

whom he sees as having misunderstood Kierkegaard and having problematically attempted to “cleanse” Kierkegaard’s concepts of their Lutheran, religious meaning.³⁵ On several occasions he also takes the trouble to critique the scholarship, usually in a rather general way, for instance, claiming that “they” (contemporary Kierkegaard scholars) have missed what is “decisive” in Kierkegaard’s writing, choosing a mediocre renewal of Kierkegaard’s thought over an exploration of the latent and radical possibilities that his thinking contained for a wholly “new epoch of philosophy.”³⁶ To miss these latent possibilities is to miss more than what is latent in Kierkegaard; it is to miss what is utterly central. The idea of transforming the present into something new is precisely the thought that keeps Heidegger close to Kierkegaard; it is the thought they share—both as modernists, and as Christians—despite all of their other, more glaring differences.

In many contexts the disciplinary questions discussed above are tied up with Heidegger’s interpretations of the history and projected future of Western thinking and particularly the role played by Christianity therein. In a lecture from November 1934, “The Contemporary Situation and Imminent Task of German Philosophy,” Heidegger claims that the prevailing tendencies of contemporary philosophy are essentially nothing more than attempts to emulate and modify the works of the “three greatest thinkers of the nineteenth century: *Hegel*, *Kierkegaard*, and *Nietzsche*.” While Hegel’s system represents the “consummation of the course of Western philosophy” because it “sealed the truth of Christianity together with the truth of Philosophy as absolute knowing,” Kierkegaard is the “rebellion” against this system and its purportedly abstract synthesis of philosophy and Christianity, launched from the standpoint of the “Christian existence [*Dasein*] of the individual in faith.” Nietzsche, Heidegger claims, completes this triad by being the “negation of both” Christianity and hitherto existing philosophy, since they were responsible for preparing the way into nihilism.³⁷ In another context, discussing the development of “existence” as a philosophical category, Heidegger describes Kierkegaard as a kind of blip or “detour” in the consummation of metaphysics, explaining that Kierkegaard is “neither theologian nor metaphysician but what is essential in both of these, in a peculiarly concentrated sense.”³⁸ In other words, he explains the significance of Kierkegaard’s complex relation to theology and philosophy as responsible for a deviation in the unfolding “end” of metaphysics.³⁹ This is perhaps the

³⁵ For this remark about Jaspers having cleansed [*gereinigt*] Kierkegaard’s religiosity from his concepts, see GA 9:27. Other discussions of Jaspers’ relation to Kierkegaard can be found in GA 6.2:434d and 49:37–38. Also see GA 96:216 for a critical account of Jaspers as a “secularizer” of Kierkegaard.

³⁶ GA 29/30:225.

³⁷ GA 16:317.

³⁸ GA 6.2:472–73.

³⁹ The “end of metaphysics” is a theme that runs throughout Heidegger’s later writings (e.g., GA 65:184, 469; and 66:401).

reason we find the logic of “remaining” so pervasive in Heidegger’s references: Kierkegaard “remains” in a vulgar perspective on time,⁴⁰ and “remains” in Hegelian metaphysics,⁴¹ as if he were left behind by progress: “In the properly philosophical aspect of his thought, [Kierkegaard] did not break free from Hegel. . . . His reading the Paradox into the New Testament and things Christian was simply negative Hegelianism. But what he really wanted (phenomenal) was something different. When today the attempt is made to connect the authentic fundamental tendency of phenomenology with dialectic, this is as if one wanted to mix fire and water.”⁴²

Yet more positively, Heidegger can write in 1941 that Kierkegaard is, “in an emphatic sense—in his conduct and way of thinking—incomparable; he must remain standing on his own; neither theology nor philosophy can rank him in their history.”⁴³ By framing the disciplinary question as a question of “belonging to the history of” philosophy or theology, Heidegger underscores this link between the disciplinary and philosophical-historical questions.⁴⁴

The stake, for Heidegger, in all this questioning about development and Kierkegaard’s genre or discipline is of course not merely in arriving at an accurate intellectual-historical picture of the nineteenth century. Heidegger’s interest in the history of metaphysics plays a decisive role in his philosophy, for it bears directly on the situation that he has inherited (categories, questions, presuppositions, possibilities). Insofar as his later writings are devoted to articulating the *possibility* for a new beginning for thinking, figuring out where we are will involve figuring out what has brought us here. For the most part, Heidegger thinks in terms of wholes, and this tendency is only exaggerated when he discusses metaphysics: from Plato to Nietzsche, Western history has been the unrolling of one basic pattern of thought—one name for which is “ontotheology”—and the essence of this pattern is a forgetting of the question about the meaning of being. Certainly Kierkegaard does not manage to make his way out of metaphysics, in Heidegger’s view, but he doesn’t seem to fit in easily either.

What I am suggesting here is that Heidegger’s critique of Kierkegaard scholarship and his keenness for the anomalous character of Kierkegaard’s thinking—“emphatically incomparable in conduct and manner of thinking,”⁴⁵ he notes of Kierkegaard in 1941—are closely related to one another. For in all of the passages that deal with those two themes, which form quite a large number, we find a profound, if often only subtly articulated sense that in the history of Kierkegaard’s reception something important has

⁴⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 497n, and *Sein und Zeit*, 338n.

⁴¹ Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 213, and GA 8:216.

⁴² Heidegger, *Ontology*, 33, and GA 63:42.

⁴³ GA 49:19.

⁴⁴ For this see, e.g., GA 32:18–19, and 49:19–20, 110.

⁴⁵ GA 49:19.

been and continues to be overlooked. In a passage about the “moment” from the 1929–30 course on metaphysics, part of which was quoted above, Heidegger writes the following: “What we mean here by ‘moment’ is that which *Kierkegaard*, for the first time in philosophy, really conceived—a conception with which the *possibility* of a completely new epoch of philosophy begins, for the first time since antiquity. Possibility, I say: for today, where *Kierkegaard* for whatever reason has become fashionable, we have gotten to the point that this literature about *Kierkegaard*, and everything that goes with it, in every way ensures that what is decisive in *Kierkegaardian* philosophy remains ungrasped.”⁴⁶ The quantity of intensifiers here speaks for itself: “for the first time,” “really,” “completely new,” “everything that goes with it,” “in every way.” What I am calling Heidegger’s hesitation with respect to *Kierkegaard* also rears its head in the lecture course on Hegel just a year later, when he describes *Kierkegaard* and Nietzsche as figures that for some reason, we simply “are not able to take seriously enough.”⁴⁷ The implicit sense of this sentence, that *Kierkegaard*’s thought is charged with a meaning that is decisive for us, but a meaning that we cannot yet appreciate, is quite explicit in a few passages from the thirties. In the *Contributions to Philosophy*, composed from around 1936 to 1938, Heidegger writes the following, in a section titled “Hölderlin–*Kierkegaard*–Nietzsche”: “None would be so presumptuous today and take it as mere accident that these three, who have at last, each in his own way, suffered most deeply through the uprooting to which Western history is being driven, and who have at the same time intuited their gods most inwardly, had to depart so prematurely from the brightness of their days. What is being prepared?” Heidegger goes on to say that it was Hölderlin, the earliest of the three, who managed to see the furthest. But the remainder of the passage applies again to the three figures as a group:

What hidden history of the so frequently invoked nineteenth century took place here?

What motive force of the future prepares itself there?

Must we then not turn our thinking to completely different areas and standards and ways of being, in order yet to become participants in the necessities breaking forth here? Or does this history remain inaccessible to us as the ground of our existence [*Dasein*], not because it is past, but rather is still too far ahead of us?⁴⁸

The second such passage comes from *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, a lecture course that was held during the same period that Heidegger was assembling the *Contributions*:

Have we at all considered sufficiently that something miraculous comes to pass whenever the history of the West, in its most profound meditations, surmises its

⁴⁶ GA 29/30:226.

⁴⁷ GA 32:18–19.

⁴⁸ GA 65:204.

unrolling to its end? The miracle is that the ones who suffered such meditation, and created it, and hence bore the knowledge of what was entirely other, were prematurely torn away from the sanity of their Dasein—and this in wholly different ways in their own respective domains: Schiller, Hölderlin, Kierkegaard, van Gogh, Nietzsche. Did they all merely ‘break down,’ as an extrinsic calculation would perhaps ascertain, or was a new song sung to them, one that never tolerates an ‘and so forth’ but demands the sacrifice of the ‘shortest path’ (Hölderlin)?

These names are like enigmatic signs, inscribed in the most hidden ground of our history. We hardly give a thought to the sheer power of this series of signs, which is not to say that we would be strong enough to understand it. These signs are harbingers of a change of history, lying deeper and reaching further than all ‘revolutions’ within the compass of the activities of men, of peoples, and of their contrivances. Here something comes to pass, for which we have no measure and no space—at least not yet—and we therefore force it into disfiguration and disguise, if we speak about it by means of language as constituted hitherto.⁴⁹

Though far from transparent in themselves, these passages taken together highlight the degree to which Heidegger appreciated and even seemed to value Kierkegaard’s anomalous nature in the history of metaphysics. They also indicate that the legacy of Kierkegaard, like that of Nietzsche or Hölderlin, was wrapped up for Heidegger with the possibility of revolutionary (or überrevolutionary, if we follow Heidegger’s emphasis here) force, (i.e., with the possibility of a radical renewal in thinking in the present).

But if this is so, then we face another, more pointed version of the question with which this essay began. For if we take these remarks seriously, that Kierkegaard stood for Heidegger with the greatest nineteenth-century thinkers, as a harbinger of deep historical change, then why should Heidegger—who devoted years of lectures to the works of Nietzsche and Hölderlin and who developed a philosophy of the artwork out of the study of a single Van Gogh painting—not have treated Kierkegaard’s with anything like this intense and direct engagement? The answer, I suggest, has to do with the peculiar sort of religious thinker that Kierkegaard was and with the unusual relationship between his work and what is called “metaphysics,” whether in traditional or Heideggerian terms.

The last sections of Heidegger’s published “Nietzsche-Auslegung,” which date from 1941 and are, like most of Heidegger’s work on Nietzsche, consumed by the task of delimiting the historical and philosophical scope of metaphysics, contain an extended analysis of the concept of actuality. His aim is to try to show that one of the basic features of metaphysical thinking is that it interrogates beings, that is, whatever is (*das Seiende*) by first reducing the full sense of being, what it is or means to be, to the category of the real or actual (*die Wirklichkeit*). Identifying this reductive habit enables Heidegger to argue for an integrity within the Western metaphysical tradition

⁴⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 182, and GA 45:216.

from classical Greece to scholastic theology to modern Christianized Europe (i.e., an integrity that supersedes the difference between religious and philosophical traditions) and gives him “metaphysics” as a more or less defined object of critique:

When being has been converted into *actualitas* (actuality), then beings are whatever is actual, i.e., they are determined as actuated in the sense of occasioned productions. This determination is what makes sense of the actuality both of human action and of divine creation: Being, which has been converted into *actualitas*, gives beings on the whole that basic characteristic of actuality, which in turns empowers biblical Christianity to secure for itself a metaphysical justification for the faith in creation. Conversely, through the dominance of the Christian-ecclesial interpretation of beings, the fundamental positioning of being as actuality reaches an obviousness that has remained the criterion for all subsequent ontology, even outside the strict posture of faith and the way it teaches one to interpret beings.⁵⁰

Heidegger goes on to comment on various stages within this legacy of theologically supercharged metaphysics, but the endpoint of the essay is a discussion of the category of existence. We see the question that occupies him: How has *existentia* been tangled up in the metaphysical enterprise? How does the concept of existence that precedes Heidegger’s own idea of *Dasein* fare when subjected to a critique of metaphysics? The answer, unsurprisingly perhaps, is that all preceding philosophies treat existence as a species of actuality. Even the so-called philosophy of existence, which often understands itself in opposition to metaphysics, is guilty of this charge. For even though it lifts existence from its scholastic opposition with essence and uses it to describe an aspect of human becoming rather than human nature, *Existenzphilosophie* accepts subjective self-consciousness as the basic unit of reality. For Kierkegaard as for Jaspers and as for Schelling before them both (whom Heidegger often includes in his genealogies of existence-philosophy), existence refers to the actualized self, the actualized human being qua self-conscious subject.

As Heidegger tries to sketch out how Kierkegaard fits into this very general scheme, a revealing impulse emerges: understanding Kierkegaard’s concept of existence becomes a matter of understanding his Christianity, of understanding “the Christian determination of the concept existence.”⁵¹ We thus find Heidegger continually trying to wedge in between Kierkegaard and the category of existence a third thing called “Christian faith.”⁵² This maneuver might be understandable if Heidegger’s understanding of Christian faith were grounded in Kierkegaard’s texts, or even in a Lutheran or Protestant understanding of faith close to Kierkegaard’s. Instead Heidegger seems to have relied on his own background in scholastic theology. The

⁵⁰ GA 6.2:414.

⁵¹ GA 6.2:472.

⁵² GA 6.2:475–77, 49:25–26.

section on Kierkegaard in Heidegger's two-volume work on Nietzsche consists of a series of elliptical and ultimately abortive attempts to pin down Kierkegaard's concept of existence, culminating in the following plan: "To be shown: . . . How Kierkegaard adopts the distinction between *essentia* and *existentia*, while he restricts the concept of existence to the Christianity of being-a-Christian, whereby it should not be said that the non-existent is the non-actual. If only the human being is existent, then it is precisely God that is the actual as such and actuality."⁵³ Heidegger never made good on this plan. The ten pages that follow discuss the urgency of a critique of actuality, with nothing to say about either Kierkegaard or existence. The lecture course from the same year, which contains a longer section on Kierkegaard's concept of existence, by contrast, has nothing to say about actuality. All of which is perhaps for the best, since the critique bears little resemblance to reality. While God is invoked and characterized in different ways by Kierkegaard's various texts and pseudonyms, one would be hard-pressed to come up with any that interpret God as the most fully actualized being. *The Sickness unto Death*, which puzzlingly enough seems to be the source for most of Heidegger's remarks in this section, famously dissociates the idea of God from actuality in defining God as the fact "*that all things are possible*."⁵⁴ Kierkegaard so consistently refuses the tendency to describe God in ontological terms, in fact, that it would be reasonable to say that for him his God is not even a being.⁵⁵ These are significant problems for one who hopes that by associating Kierkegaard with conventional Christian ideas about God and the self, the Dane will also fall neatly into a conceptual history of Christian metaphysics.

CHRISTIAN TIES AND THE QUESTION OF SECULARIZATION

That the reckoning with Kierkegaard's religious legacy, long after Heidegger seems to have abandoned the intensive study of Kierkegaard's texts,

⁵³ GA 6.2:480.

⁵⁴ Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 40, and *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter* [SKS], ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Joakim Garff, Johnny Kondrup, et al., 28 vols. (Copenhagen: Gads, 1997–2013), 11:155.

⁵⁵ Kierkegaard's departure from classical theological definitions of God as actuality has been explored by a number of scholars. See in particular Clare Carlisle, "Baruch de Spinoza: Questioning Transcendence, Teleology, and Truth," in *Kierkegaard and the Renaissance and Modern Traditions*, vol. 1, ed. Jon Stewart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 167–95, esp. 184–86. George Stack offers an exemplary account of the complexity of Kierkegaard's position in his review of Wilde's 1973 book on Kierkegaard: "Now, if the actuality of God could be the object of faith, then faith would be unnecessary. For Kierkegaard, God remains a possibility or 'ideality' for human understanding. To be sure, the man of faith believes that God is an actuality or believes in the actuality of God. But God, as Troens Gjenstand, is an objective uncertainty (i.e., a possibility). Faith is concerned with an ideality which is understood as a possibility, but which the individual relates himself to as if this ideality (God) were an actuality"; review of *Kierkegaards Verstandnis der Existenz* by Frank-Eberhard Wilde, *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 11, no. 2 (1973): 277.

flares up again around 1941 may have something to do with the shifting fortunes of Christianity within Heidegger's overall critique of metaphysics. The Christian faith, he writes in the Nietzsche lecture notes, "has appropriated to itself the fundamental relations of metaphysics and in this cast has brought metaphysics to Western dominance."⁵⁶ But as Max Müller reflects after a meeting with Heidegger some years later, Heidegger's views on this point are far from constant:

The position on Christianity goes through something like the following steps:

From 1919–29 an earnest confrontation with Protestant Christianity takes place. From 1929 is it then clear to him that only the Catholic form of Christianity can make the claim to be decisively representative for Christianity in general. He now increasingly approaches an either-or, and from 1933–40 he resolved himself to the fact that Christianity, in which for him even the most venerable traditions of the West are decided, would be the decisive hindrance to the reformation [*Neuformung*] of the human being in the present. In these seven years, his thesis is that one must have decided for or against Christianity and that for genuine philosophy a decision against Christianity is required. From 1941 this opposition again becomes questionable for him, and he grows uncertain whether, in fighting Christianity, he had fought only against modern scholastic degenerations of Christianity, and whether there could be a possible form of Catholicism in which he too would find a place. In this uncertainty Heidegger remains today.⁵⁷

Müller was a former student of Heidegger's and, when this passage was written in 1947, on his way to becoming a prominent Catholic philosopher.⁵⁸ It would surely have been gratifying to Müller, then, to see in Heidegger's late thinking a softening of his views on religion and the seeds of a return to his Catholic roots. For all its potential bias, however, Müller's commentary nonetheless presents a valuable, firsthand attestation of the fact that the critique presupposed by Heidegger's "reformation of the human being" seemed sometimes less than certain about whether and how Christianity would be implicated by this change.

Müller's remarks also lend credence to my argument here, namely that indecision about the meaning of Kierkegaard's legacy reflects Heidegger's own hesitation about the proper role that religion, and specifically the Christian religion, ought to play in the new form of thinking and being that he was so eager to get off the ground. For if, as we saw in so many of the passages cited above, the meaning of Kierkegaard's thought is nearly always linked to the meaning of his exceptional status within and outside the Christian tradition, any instability in Heidegger's understanding of that tradition

⁵⁶ GA 6.2, 430–31.

⁵⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Briefe an Max Müller und andere Dokumente*, ed. Holger Zaborowski and Anton Bösl (Freiburg: Alber, 2004), 74–75.

⁵⁸ Heidegger was also notoriously terrible to his Catholic students, including Müller, upon returning to Freiburg. See Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1988), 259ff.

and its ongoing significance would be sure to affect his ability to assess the work of Kierkegaard.

Philosophers who have broached the question of religion in the relation between the two thinkers have tended to rely on a framework of secularization, a term which tends to be rather loosely if at all defined. In this vein we have interpretations ranging from Hubert Dreyfus, who holds that Heidegger's magnum opus, *Being and Time*, amounts to a philosophical secularization of Kierkegaard's Christian-"religious" writings, to Hermann Philipse, on the other, who saw Heidegger as only appearing to secularize Kierkegaard's work, and instead merely "modifying" Christian religion for a "post-monotheistic" age.⁵⁹ Philipse's position reflects a common and rather nebulous impression of Heidegger's work, especially from the thirties onward, as having a religious "tone" or "attitude" (albeit without being explicitly theological). Yet it is Dreyfus's thesis about secularization that has had the most pull, despite the fact that it was preemptively refuted both by Heidegger himself and by his French proponent Jean Beaufret: "It has occasionally been thought possible to characterize Heidegger's thought, in particular that of *Being and Time*, as the *secularization* of Kierkegaard. Just as much as Husserl's *Lessons on Internal Time-Consciousness* are the secularization of Saint Augustine's *Confessions* . . . or as Scheler's book on the *Formalization in Ethics*, where the author refers to Pascal, is the secularization of the *Pensées*!"⁶⁰

I see two sorts of problems with this way of framing the conversation. First, to describe Heidegger as a secularizer of Kierkegaard (whether successful or failed) repeats Heidegger's error in connecting Kierkegaard to "Christianity" as a kind of preestablished, unambiguous identity, an available type to which he more or less passively belonged. This approach fails on an empirical score insofar as it cannot account for the innovation with which Kierkegaard's writing, an oeuvre stretched exceptionally among the drives to reform, to rationalize, and to radicalize Christianity, reconstituted for itself the meaning of that term. Worse, though, is that it also fails hermeneutically, insofar as it obscures Heidegger's almost hysterical desire to *invent* Kierkegaard's Christianity as a way of fitting him and all the popular Kierkegaardianism of the day into the relatively tidy history of metaphysics.

The second problem with the secularization formula is its vagueness when applied to a discourse that is almost exclusively conceptual. What could it possibly mean to secularize an *idea*? What exactly happens when a religious value or concept is dislodged from its traditional context and placed into the center of a philosophical system or schema, with its own suppositions and directives? It is certainly arguable that Heidegger sup-

⁵⁹ Hubert L. Dreyfus and Jane Rubin, appendix to Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 283–340; Herman Philipse, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 172–210.

⁶⁰ Jean Beaufret, *Les philosophes de l'existence* (Paris: Denoël/Gonthier, 1971), 96–97.

plied formal, philosophical grounds for, inter alia, Kierkegaard's psychological radicalization of the Christian idea of sin. Can we say then, that in shutting off entirely the already dwindling metaphysical backlight of Kierkegaard's idea of sin, by reformulating his psychological insights as ontological conditions, what Heidegger achieved was a secularization of sin? Such a conclusion confuses, I would argue, the secular with the formal or methodological and, in tandem, religion with the dogmatic faith that has been abstracted and formalized. And in doing so it not only defers the question about the status of Heidegger's relation to religion but actually aggravates this question by forcing it into spaces where the terms are more difficult to formulate: stylistics, rhetoric, biography, reception. What differentiates, formally speaking, a philosophical reading that formalizes Kierkegaard's religious psychology under the charge of a phenomenological ontology, from an apologetic discourse that develops a rational, phenomenological context for certain theological ideas? This unanswered question is but the reverse side of Heidegger's much-extolled "methodological atheism."⁶¹ For it is not just a matter of "cleansing" the Lutheranism out of Kierkegaard, as Heidegger himself so sharply reminded Jaspers; there must also be a way to talk about what sorts of forms, possibilities, and habits of thought this sort of philosophical translation actually imports into the present. If Heidegger's existential translations of sin, anxiety, finitude, and despair—which have inspired multiple generations of theological retranslations and returns—are to be understood as secular, then we need to reexamine the idea of religion we are working with.⁶² Alastair Hannay hints at a similar worry in his own response to Dreyfus, noting that while "Heidegger describes his account of Dasein as structural and as for that reason deliberately eschewing theology," precisely in "being structural it cannot predetermine the forms *das Man* might take and Heidegger says quite explicitly that this kind of account "precedes" any considerations of a theological kind." As for the claim of secularization, he concludes, "It all depends on what a Heideggerian can allow to come *after* an analysis of Dasein."⁶³

⁶¹ *Prinzipieller Atheismus* (GA 61:196). For what is perhaps the most influential interpretation of this strategy, see István M. Fehér, "Heidegger's Understanding of the Atheism of Philosophy: Philosophy, Theology, and Religion in his Early Lecture Courses up to *Being and Time*," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (1995): 185–228.

⁶² Writing of the immediate theological appropriations of *Being and Time*, John D. Caputo has observed: "The reason [Bultmann's] deformational [of Heidegger's ontology] worked so well was that the existential analytic was . . . itself the issue of a formalization of Christian factual life. Bultmann was largely reversing the process that had brought *Being and Time* about in the first place. I believe much the same thing can be said of Paul Tillich—also a Marburg colleague of Heidegger—whose early existential theology draws on motifs in *Being and Time* that are themselves originally drawn from an analysis of the New Testament": "Heidegger and Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 275.

⁶³ Alastair Hannay, "Kierkegaard's Present Age and Ours," in *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus*, ed. Mark Wrathall and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 1:113.

Heidegger does appear, at least in certain moments, to have been surprisingly sensitive to these issues. In an early letter to Karl Löwith, he expresses the peculiar difficulty of approaching Kierkegaard in terms of his "Christianity":

Even Kierkegaard can only be shaken up theologically (as I understand it and am going to develop in the winter semester)—I fear that with regard to him you fall into the error that you always expose so well in the rebuttals of idealism. But it is already a lot to attempt not to let Kierkegaard cast a spell over oneself. I have a different way of conceiving a relation to him. Particularly warped is the attempt (e.g., with Jaspers) to exploit him psychologically, which yields a turbid syncretism. But still worse is to commit oneself to him Christianly with neck and crop, which is not difficult; this is for me a signal that one is in fact not grappling [*auseinandersetzt*] with what is Christian, but mistaking the Christian for Kierkegaard himself. To become a Hegelian is only half as bad as a Kierkegaardian. What Kierkegaard has said that is important is to be newly appropriated, but in the rigor of a critique that grows out of one's own situation—blind appropriation is the greatest seduction, it is to make a trashy novel out of one's own inwardness and thereby to make people's skin crawl [*gruseln machen*].⁶⁴

Heidegger's turn of phrase here—to criticize passing from "the Christian" [*das Christliche*] used as a substantive noun to "Christian" used as a proper adjective—sheds light on the shortcomings of many of his interpreters, including on occasion Heidegger himself. This passage also reveals how carefully Heidegger considered the problem of Christianity in dealing with Kierkegaard's legacy, already in 1920, as an assistant professor in Freiburg—that is, before any of his encounters with Bultmann or the Marburg theological circles. It does, however, not tell us much about what he actually wanted to *do* with *das Christliche* in Kierkegaard. Heidegger's account breaks off just where he should explain his own approach in positive terms: "I have a different way of conceiving a relation to him." He will do the same thing a year later in the essay on Jaspers, in which he lauds Kierkegaard memorably for his "methodological rigor," only to add that "the question of where he achieved this rigor is not important here."⁶⁵ Again and again he distinguishes his methods and aims from those of Kierkegaard. Again and again he chides his contemporaries for having failed to grasp the nature of these differences. Yet he never offers a precise account of how we should understand their differences.

One might take such obliqueness as a deliberate attempt to conceal his purposes. It would not be the first example of such obfuscation in Heidegger's corpus. But given the frequency of these remarks, the seemingly

⁶⁴ Letter from Heidegger to Karl Löwith dated September 13, 1920. This remark to Löwith is reinforced by a comparatively lengthy passage, from 1941, in Heidegger's only recently published notebooks, in which he denies that *Being and Time* "secularized" Kierkegaard or transposed his idea of existence into an "atheistic" philosophy. See GA 96:215–16.

⁶⁵ "Comments on Jaspers's *Psychology*," 36; GA 9:41.

small effort it ought to require simply to spell out this relationship in more concrete terms, and the absence of any compelling reason to avoid doing so, it seems more plausible to conclude that Heidegger was vague about his relation to Kierkegaard because his way of interpreting Kierkegaard involved a question about Christianity that he never fully came to terms with. In other words, what we see when we look at Heidegger's rather maddening commentary on Kierkegaard is indeed a casualty, not of Heidegger's ego, but of his failure to specify the nature of that voice capable of arbitrating the dialogue between philosophy and religious thought and experience that occurs in his own work.

Perhaps if Heidegger had been more faithful to his own recommendation to shake things up, to grapple with *das Christliche* in Kierkegaard, and less intent on mapping Kierkegaard within the history of metaphysics by virtue of his Christianity, it would be possible to do more than to refer the problems of Heidegger's Kierkegaard to the equally problematic terrain of Heidegger's Christianity. Heidegger appropriated Kierkegaard's insights and his words as extensively as his other great interlocutors, but when he found Kierkegaard's thought itself resistant to being classed within the historical system he had devised, he alternated between blaming Kierkegaard's metaphysical backwardness, admiring his protorevolutionary prescience, and tuning out the difficulty altogether.

Nonetheless, what we can take from the case is the following: (1) Kierkegaard's marginalization in Heidegger's corpus is not commensurate with his significance; (2) this incommensurability is motivated, as much by an intellectual uncertainty as a personal one (i.e., by the unresolved relation between Heidegger's own project and the religious thought it so often interpolated); and (3) the key issue in this unresolved relation is to what degree the critique of metaphysics succeeds also as a critique of Christianity more generally. It is here that the rather sorry case of Heidegger's Kierkegaard has shed light on a more systematic problem in Heidegger's thinking overall, one that bears upon the way, curious to some, in which the widespread critique of metaphysics spurred on by Heideggerian thought in the twentieth century has, far from engendering the full-fledged divorce with Christianity he seemed intent on achieving, given rise to so many different kinds of theological turns and returns.⁶⁶

Soon after the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger began to try to reformulate the aim of that work within the context of his emerging attempt to think in terms of a radically "new beginning"—not only for phi-

⁶⁶ It is thus somewhat curious that Hannay (see n. 54 above) writes in 2000 that the merit of the secularization claim "depends on what a Heideggerian can allow to come *after* an analysis of Dasein," since Hannay himself is not standing before but in the wake of a long series of diverse theological projects steeped in Heidegger, from first-generation theological interpreters like Rudolf Bultmann and Paul Tillich and Karl Rahner to contemporary philosophers such as Jean-Luc Marion, Richard Kearney, and William Desmond.

losophy, but far more ambitiously, for the future of Western "spiritual and historical existence" itself.⁶⁷ Heidegger became increasingly attached to this project over the course of the thirties, consistently maintaining that his entire philosophical oeuvre was invested in the preparation of this coming transformation.⁶⁸ Yet he could rarely describe it other than negatively. The "other beginning" should, to be sure, liberate us from the thrall of "metaphysics," "Christianity," "anthropology," "technological machination," but insofar as it is to involve a transformation so completely unprecedented in the history of the West, stretching back to pre-Socratic Greece, Heidegger's transformation cannot really be understood or imagined using existing language, which is itself implicated in the history he is hoping to leave behind. All that can be said about this mysterious *Wesenswandel* is that it is not "dialectical" or "revolutionary" or "reactionary" in any way.⁶⁹ It "is neither Christian nor anti-Christian—but rather lies outside of Christianity, outside of theology, and outside of metaphysics," Heidegger insists in a notebook entry from 1941 devoted to Kierkegaard.⁷⁰ This is why his appropriation of Kierkegaard, he adds, cannot be understood in the anti-Christian rubric of "secularizing" or "atheistic" critique. In fact, the transformation opened up by *Being and Time*, "which will first provide the *frame* for the spiritual history of our people [*unseres Volkes*]," is something that simply "cannot be proven": "It is rather a *faith*, which must be shown through history."⁷¹

CONCLUSION

This last, troubling comment from the 1933–34 lecture course "Being and Truth" is by no means isolated in the context of Heidegger's long experiment with "metapolitical" philosophy in the thirties.⁷² It suggests, in a way we should take very seriously, the sort of violence that can be involved in a thinking that insists on a complete redefinition of the terms on which its own originality should be understood. This passage also highlights the hermeneutic corner into which Heidegger's quest has painted itself. In making the problem of his relation to Christianity a corollary of his attempt

⁶⁷ GA 40:42.

⁶⁸ See, e.g., GA 34:115–16, 36/37:208, 65:14, and 66:274.

⁶⁹ The new beginning is "no counter-movement; for all counter-movements and oppositional forces are for their essential part codetermined by *that* which they oppose. . . . A counter-movement never suffices for an *essential* transformation of history": GA 65:186.

⁷⁰ GA 96:215–16.

⁷¹ GA 36/37:255. Let there be no confusion about Heidegger's terms here: "Es wird eine Wandlung sein, die allererst den *Rahmen* darbieten wird für die Geistesgeschichte unseres Volkes. Dies kann nicht bewiesen werden, sondern ist ein *Glaube*, der durch die Geschichte erwiesen werden muß."

⁷² See, e.g., Christian Sommer, *Heidegger 1933—le programme platonicien du "Discours de rectorat"* (Paris: Hermann, 2013) for a prescient analysis of this metapolitical program, confirmed by the recently published "black notebooks" from the same period (GA 94:115).

to push forward a transformation so unparalleled that we must invent new words even to begin to wait for it, what Heidegger leaves his reader with is a clear insistence that this transformation lies completely outside of Christianity without offering a clear sense of how to formulate this distinction. This is a serious problem, even before we consider the fact that Christianity is itself the source of many of the most powerful and entrenched ideas of personal and cultural transformation in Western history and that the further Heidegger proceeds in his thinking of transformation, the more he flirts with a series of quasi-religious words—including *Sprung* (leap), *prophetisch*, and *Einkehr* (a term central to German mystical and pietistic literature denoting the soul's *conversio* toward God).⁷³

Being and Time is supposed to stand as essential preparation for the “other beginning” by occasioning the preliminary “transformation into human existence [*die Verwandlung in das Da-sein*]” through which the metaphysical, anthropological, and subjective accounts of human being are thoroughly undermined.⁷⁴ And at the center of this text is Heidegger's penetrating reformulation of the Christian life-world—a project for which above all Kierkegaard, along with Augustine, Paul, and Luther, is absolutely crucial. Yet Heidegger will not describe this reformulation as secular, theological, or atheistic. Should it then be so surprising that Heidegger, finding himself with few adequate words at his disposal, also finds himself unable to specify the precise character of his relation to Kierkegaard as his early, Christian “impetus”? Kierkegaard, too, as Heidegger knew well, understood his task as “religious writer” as being the solitary proponent of radical spiritual change. Unlike Heidegger, Kierkegaard maintained that this transformation should be sought only on the part of the “single individual” and that it had been best formulated by Christianity.⁷⁵ At the same time, what Kierkegaard's Christianity might actually look like, if realized, was by no means obvious: “In the eighteen hundred years of ‘Christendom,’ there is absolutely nothing corresponding to my task, nothing analogous to it,” Kierkegaard wrote in the late polemical texts, “it is for the first time in ‘Christendom.’”⁷⁶

The precise role of Christianity in Heidegger's attempt to prepare the way for a radical departure from metaphysics is a complicated question,

⁷³ GA 10:140–41, 4:114, 9:423ff., 65:228, 310. On the provenance of *Einkehr*, see August Langen, *Der Wortschatz der deutschen Pietismus* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 194).

⁷⁴ This phrase is peppered throughout the texts of the late thirties and early forties. See GA 65:475, 66:108, and also 41, 143–44, 163, 168, 362, and 70:113.

⁷⁵ “Christianity is that which, from the deepest ground, wants to move existence” (SKS 26:95). This late journal entry is echoed by a line from one of his final publications, written in the summer of 1855, just months before his death: “What every religion in which there is any truth aims at, and what Christianity aims at decisively, is a total transformation [*Omforandring*] in a man, to wrest from him through renunciation and self-denial all that, and precisely that, to which he immediately clings, in which he immediately has his life”; Søren Kierkegaard, *Attack on Christendom*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 221, and SKS, 13:304.

⁷⁶ Kierkegaard, *Attack on Christendom*, 285, and SKS, 13:404–5.

too important and too vast to be handled at the end of a discussion of his reading of Kierkegaard. Nonetheless, insofar as it has been possible to peer into the conditions of this fractured yet intense interpretation, namely, to see that Kierkegaard's uncertain position within Heidegger's history of metaphysics was rooted in the latter's inability to distinguish clearly between the Christian and the metaphysical, we may also have seen one reason why Heidegger's work, despite his vehement protests against all assimilation with Christianity, has had such a long and productive relationship with Christian theology in the twentieth century.

What language, indeed, might have been available to Heidegger, in the midst of an increasingly chiliastic philosophical discourse, to specify the distinction between his project and that of a nonmetaphysical theology? How might his "other beginning," which was supposed to have gone so far beyond Christianity that it made even the secular seem religious, have been distinguishable from a Christian critique of metaphysics? Clarifying the relation between Christianity and metaphysics has been a key step in unraveling Heidegger's confused reading of Kierkegaard. It may, I suspect, also help as we begin to reflect on the long and often surprising history of theological interventions for which Heidegger's work, in all its staunch anti-anittheism, served as a new point of departure.

We in Our Turmoil: Theological Anthropology through Maria Montessori and the Lives of Children*

Natalie Carnes / *Baylor University*

A few decades ago, a small stone of concern about whom theology excludes began rolling through the field of theology. It gained momentum as it gathered questions, including important ones in theological anthropology: What is the significance of the fact that almost all preserved writings pondering what it means to be human originate from monastic—and often privileged—men? And then: How might theological anthropology look different if authored by and attentive to different bodies?

Various feminists and liberationists have identified the way patriarchy, whiteness, and power have determined theological discussion, and slowly mainstream theology has opened to these concerns. But there is another class of humans whose bodies have been insufficiently acknowledged in theological discourse: children.¹ This neglect is especially grievous if Maria Montessori is right that children name not just one group of humanity among others, nor a phase on the path to adulthood, but an entire pole of humanity, one that must be kept in balance with the adult. By her lights, the child and adult are not just successive phases in an individual life but are “two different forms of human life, going on at the same time, and exerting upon one another reciprocal influence.”² If childhood constitutes a “form of human life” rather than simply incomplete human life or a transitional phase preparing for adulthood, then the dearth of serious theological re-

* My thanks to Matthew Whelan and David Cramer for improving this essay and to the *Journal of Religion* reviewers for their insightful comments.

¹ Bonnie Miller-McLemore made this point in her article “Whither the Children? Childhood in Religious Education,” *Journal of Religion* 86, no. 4 (October 2006): 635–57. “Since its inception, Western theology has largely cast the mature adult Caucasian male as primary actor. While questions about the need for greater inclusivity have led to fresh consideration of gender, race, ethnicity, and class, the adult-centered proclivity of theology has become even more entrenched in the last few centuries” (635).

² Maria Montessori, *The Child in the Church*, ed. E. M. Standing (Chantilly, VA: The Madonna and Child Atrium, 1965), 7.

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flection on children should alarm scholars as a woeful imbalance in theological anthropology.

In what follows, I continue the work of feminist and liberationist theologians by noting the importance of children to theological reflection. I do so, in particular, by establishing Montessori as a figure worthy of theological consideration. She did not profess to be a theologian, but Montessori's observations of children can help us articulate a supple theological anthropology that offers a sophisticated and persuasive approach to original sin—despite initial impressions. Her images of original sin depict a chain connecting the sin of Eden to the sin of Calvary to those neglecting “the least of these,” as she makes plain the way we are responsible for a fallenness that is yet beyond us. Montessori's remarks on the nature and Christ-likeness of children advance a doctrine of original sin that helps to make sense of the darkness in the world even as she identifies sources of hope within it.

CHILDREN IN THEOLOGY

Theological deliberation about children has not been wholly absent. Such twentieth-century luminaries as Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and to some extent Jacques Maritain wrote on childhood.³ Balthasar in particular was drawn to the topic, especially toward the end of his life, when he penned a manuscript found after his death called *Unless You Become Like This Child*. Yet, though these figures have received substantial scholarly attention, their work on children has gone largely unnoticed.

In the past decade, however, there have been intimations of interest in these theologians' writings on children. Theologian Edmund Newey engages Balthasar, Rahner, and several others in a book theorizing theological anthropology through childhood.⁴ Martin Marty has opened up new theological vistas into childhood by engaging Rahner among others in his book, *The Mystery of the Child*.⁵ In general, theologians and religion scholars have given increasing notice to the lack of reflection on children. One piece of evidence for this change is the number of special editions of journals on children, including the January 2000 edition of *Theology Today*, the October 2006 special issue of the *Journal of Religion*, and the planned January 2018 edition of *Catholic Moral Theology*.

³ Karl Rahner wrote an essay titled “Ideas for a Theology of Childhood,” in *Theological Investigations, Volume 3: Theology of the Spiritual Life*, trans. David Bourke (New York: Herder & Herder, 1967), 33–50. Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote about children throughout various works and left when he died the manuscript published posthumously as *Unless You Become Like This Child* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991). Jacques Maritain wrote on education and youth rather than childhood, and his writings on this theme included *Education at the Crossroads* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1943), and *The Education of Man*, ed. Donald Gallagher and Idella Gallagher (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962).

⁴ Edmund Newey, *Children of God: The Child as Source of Theological Anthropology* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).

⁵ Martin E. Marty, *The Mystery of the Child* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007).

In the *Journal of Religion* special issue, entitled “Religion and Childhood Studies,” Marica Bunge laments that few scholars of religion have treated childhood as a topic worthy of serious theological reflection nor have many attempted to elaborate “robust religious understandings of children.”⁶ Bunge has edited volumes of essays surveying childhood in the Bible and Christian thought and directs the Child Theology Movement, which advocates for the centrality of children to theological reflection.⁷ Her work has led her to call for progress along two trajectories: “theologies of childhood,” which “provide sophisticated understandings of children and childhood and our obligations to children themselves,” and “child theologies,” which “re-examine not only conceptions of children and obligations to them but also fundamental doctrines and practices of the church.”⁸ One who has worked along both of these lines is Bonnie Miller-McLemore. She also contributed to the special issue, noting the problem that “the adult-centered proclivity of theology has become even more entrenched in the last few centuries.”⁹ She sees a source of hope in the Godly Play movement authored by Jerome Berryman, who has received significant positive attention from scholars of religion studying childhood and religious education.

The source of Berryman’s increasingly heralded work is Maria Montessori. Berryman trained as a Montessori teacher and developed his curriculum out of Montessori’s approach to children.¹⁰ Yet unlike Berryman, Montessori receives scant attention from scholars of religion.¹¹ Her legacy is restricted to secular education, though her writing is at times overtly religious. A good subset of her writing—including some of her most popular texts—teems with theological vocabulary, images, and categories. She wrote often, for example, of Christ, Mary, and the Blessed Sacrament. She did graduate work in philosophical anthropology and named Thomas Aquinas as a major source for her work. Later she declared her educational philosophy was Catholic “in its very substance” and claimed she longed to see

⁶ Marcia J. Bunge, “The Child, Religion, and the Academy: Developing Robust Theological and Religious Understandings of Children and Childhood,” *Journal of Religion* 86, no. 4 (October 2006): 549–79, 551.

⁷ Marcia J. Bunge, *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001); Marcia J. Bunge, Terence E. Fretheim, and Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Child in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008). The mission and work of the Child Theology Movement can be found on their website, <http://www.childtheology.org/>.

⁸ Bunge, “The Child, Religion, and the Academy,” 554.

⁹ Miller-McLemore, “Whither the Children?,” 635.

¹⁰ Berryman was a Montessori teacher and trained in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, the religious formation movement carrying out her educational program. Yet the only substantive attention to Montessori comes from Jerome Berryman himself, who often mentions her in his Godly Play manuals and wrote an article entitled “Montessori and Religious Education,” *Religious Education* 75, no. 3 (May–June 1980): 294–307.

¹¹ There are exceptions. Roman Guardini mentions Montessori briefly in his introduction to his catechetical booklet, *Sacred Signs* (St. Louis: Pio Decimo Press, 1956); and Gustav Siewerth, who influenced Hans Urs von Balthasar, references Montessori’s reading of birth through Christ’s crucifixion. Gustav Siewerth, *Metaphysik Der Kindheit* (Einseideln: Johannes, 1957), 25.

her work culminate in a religious order devoted to children.¹² Pope Benedict XV even asked her to design a syllabus for Catholic schools.¹³ Throughout a life that spanned both world wars and multiple countries (1870–1952), Montessori articulated her work for children in the terms of her deep Catholic faith.

It is time more scholars contemplate the theological significance of Montessori's work, for it can contribute to a growing conversation in religious studies about children and childhood in both "child theologies" and "theologies of childhood." To draw Montessori into this conversation is to take a slightly different tack than many theological scholars of children have taken thus far. Rather than hear the importance of childhood in established theological voices, as, for example, Bunge's important volume on Christian thought does, I want to trace the theological significance of an established voice for children. Though Montessori writes at times in a theological idiom, she was not trained as a theologian nor is she read in theology departments. Nevertheless, scholars of religion and childhood could benefit from the loving attention she gave to children over the course of her life. She is a kind of anthropologist of childhood, and her work ought to interest theologians of childhood in the way Turner, Geertz, or Durkheim might interest theologians of culture. In what follows, I hope to show why.

By hearkening to the work of Montessori, I elucidate how reflection on childhood can yield important insights for theological anthropology. In particular, I show that Montessori's observations of children can help to articulate, first, an understanding of original sin that elaborates human responsibility for sinfulness and yet how overcoming such sin is beyond humans, and, second, the ways heeding children helps us hold the Christ-likeness and sinfulness of humanity together.

A NEGLECTED THEOLOGICAL VOICE

The decision to focus specifically on sin in the thought of Montessori is not an arbitrary one. I ponder her doctrine of sin because it is one of three major reasons she has not been taken seriously by scholars of religion. I have broached the other two reasons already. One is Montessori's legacy, which has largely been in secular education. The theological commitments of Montessori's approach to education have been downplayed by many of those who advertise her schools and want to emphasize their hospitality to people of all backgrounds. Montessori herself thought her schools should be open to administration and attendance by people of any faith. She insisted that, while Catholics should adopt this educational approach, it was

¹² Montessori, *The Child in the Church*, 22.

¹³ Pope Benedict XV died before this became a reality, and later popes never took up his project. E. M. Standing, "Montessori and the World Situation," in *The Child in the Church*, 72–93, 88–89, 92.

an approach that appealed to any who took the lives and needs of children seriously. In Montessori's view, the form and approach to teaching children was Catholic, but the content of the teaching material need not be.

The second reason Montessori has received little theological attention is that her work is about children, and reflection on children has not been central to theological anthropology. Instead, religious interpretation of children in the academy has been relegated to "religious education" rather than systematic theology. Miller-McLemore illumines how deeply internalized this marginalization is. She reports that when she was beginning her work reviewing children and theology, colleagues thought the natural field for her to survey would be religious education.¹⁴ (She goes on to note that she did not, in fact, find this field particularly helpful because it was filled with unsophisticated understandings of childhood as primarily a stop on the way to adulthood.) While theologians have proven themselves willing to learn from secular philosophers of the human, such as Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx (as was Montessori), they have not turned to Montessori in part because her philosophy of the human foregrounded the child, who has not been treated as central to theological anthropology.¹⁵

The third reason for neglecting Montessori is of particular interest for this present essay—namely, that Montessori has a reputation for being overly sanguine about the nature of children. In particular, she has been criticized for an inadequate understanding of their sinfulness. Frustrated by this perception of her and her philosophy, she complained to her colleague Anna Maccheroni of people who see her as a "sentimental romantic" who dreams only of kissing, cuddling, and giving candy to young children. She exclaimed of such people, "They weary me!"¹⁶ Against such visions of her as a "sentimental romantic," Montessori characterized herself in rigorous pursuit of scientific and religious truth. Nevertheless, her use of "science" at times implied the romantic notion that children are free from sinfulness. She writes, for example, "If, at conception and during gestation, at birth and the period following birth, the child has been scientifically treated, he should at three be a model individual."¹⁷ Here she appears to endorse an optimistic progressivism, a faith in science to liberate humanity from its

¹⁴ Miller-McLemore, "Whither the Children?," 635.

¹⁵ While Montessori did not profess complete agreement with either thinker, she saw Freud as an ally inasmuch as he, too, took infancy and childhood seriously for understanding the human and Marx as helpful inasmuch as his revolution centered on the worker helped prepare for the most important worker of all: the child who works to make the adult. Her esteem of Marx makes sense in light of the connection I help to display later between children and the poor in Montessori's thought. Maria Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*, trans. Barbara Barclay Carter (London: Sangam Books, 1996), 3–8, and *The Absorbent Mind*, trans. John Chattin-McNichols (New York: Henry Holt), 16–17.

¹⁶ Rita Kramer, *Maria Montessori* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1976), 251.

¹⁷ Montessori, *Absorbent Mind*, 195. Montessori follows the standard practice of her time in using "he" and "man" to refer to both genders. I will reproduce her quotations as they are printed but in my own voice refer to the singular third person as "she" and use "humanity" rather than "man."

sinful condition. Such optimism about science might have been standard in the 1940s when she made the statement in a lecture, but it rings naive at best today. Do we not have here the evidence of a theologically anemic understanding of humanity? Does she not here give grounds for theological dismissal? She seems in this moment at least to have no substantive doctrine of original sin. Does she not betray herself as a “sentimental romantic,” albeit one who romanticizes science as much as children?

Further examination of the theological imagery and vocabulary Montessori employs might initially augment the worry that she is a sentimental romantic. If the Romantic stream of thought elevates children as “quasi-divine” or “an embodiment of natural innocence,” then it might strike one as problematic that Montessori’s most common theological interpretations of children are through nature and Christ.¹⁸ Her insistently christological reading of children would appear once again to minimize the sinfulness of children and support the accusation of her as a romantic about children. Even more often than she invokes Christ, she deploys “nature” (closely allied, for her, with science) as a central category in her interpretation of children. Out of these associations of children with divinity and the natural, Montessori might be read of a piece with those Romantics who viewed small children as closer to God because they were closer to nature.

One could certainly find quotations in her thought (such as the one above proposing that the right conditions could lead to a “model individual”) that support this image of Montessori. However, observing how these themes fit together for Montessori complicates the image of Montessori as a neo-Romantic. Montessori’s use of nature and Christ in reference to childhood strain against Romanticist readings of her work, so I want to study a bit more closely how she articulates, first, children’s nature and, second, their Christ-likeness.

NATURALLY INCULTURATED

Though she uses “nature,” “the natural,” and examples from the natural world to understand children, Montessori uses “natural” to identify neither the shape of childhood, nor its morality, nor its attitudes and dispositions. It expresses, rather, the formlessness of childhood and children’s peculiar sensitivity to the environment around them. The child (ages 0–6) is for Montessori an absorbent self.¹⁹ So, for example, she likens children to insects that look like the leaves or stems on which they spend their life and which they “so perfectly resemble as to seem completely at one with them.”

¹⁸ Edmund Newey, *Children of God*, 13. This is how Newey characterizes the Romantics’ view of children.

¹⁹ Though this phase is commonly called “the absorbent mind” in Montessori’s work, and her most famous book is so titled, Montessori began to shift toward the end of her life to “the absorbent self,” which reflected the rich sensorial life of the child. As she said in one of the talks collected in *The Absorbent Mind*, “The child *absorbs* impressions not with his mind but with life itself” (24).

Like such an insect, the child, too, “absorbs the life going on about him and becomes one with it” in such a profound way that the child’s “mind ends up resembling the environment itself.” What is natural to children is to love what is around them, and, as Montessori says, “Children become like the things they love.”²⁰ (What exists naturally in insects, for Montessori, exists psychologically in children.²¹) Insects absorb and then resemble their environment; children do the same with theirs.²² But children’s environment is not “pure nature.” Their environment includes human culture.

The notion of the child’s highly plastic self, a self given shape through desire, resonates with recent work Kathryn Tanner has done with the theological anthropology of Gregory of Nyssa in the first chapter of her magisterial book *Christ the Key*. There Tanner describes human life as so dependent on environmental “inputs” that “human nature takes shape in conformity with what helps it grow.”²³ Thus humans have an “unusual plasticity” because of humanity’s “excessive openness.”²⁴ According to Tanner and Nyssen, humans come to be like what they love and what they observe.

What distinguishes Montessori’s plasticity from Tanner’s is that Montessori locates such openness in childhood (and particularly ages 0–6), not humanity generally. For Montessori, adults are not unaffected by their environments; indeed, they may even be highly sensitive to them. But they do not take their shape from them in the way that children do. Whereas the child learns to speak and walk “simply by continuing to live,” absorbing the world directly into her psychic life, adults “are recipients.” To receive impressions as an adult, for Montessori, is to store them in one’s mind but to “remain apart from them, just as a vase keeps separate from the water it contains.” The child, by contrast, transforms with impressions. Rather than entering the mind, impressions “form it.” She asserts, “They incarnate themselves in him.”²⁵ Children, then, do not receive impressions because they live their impressions. The child’s porousness to the world allows the child to acquire “personal characteristics that will mark him forever—those of his language, his religion, his race, and so on.”²⁶ Children, in this way, are “the vehicle which transports mankind through the evolution of civilisation.”²⁷ Adults cannot as easily learn language or cultural habits because, in contradistinction to the anthropologies of Tanner or Nyssen, they are not

²⁰ Ibid., 101.

²¹ Ibid., 102.

²² Ibid. And this relates to Montessori’s other invocation of insects, to show how unlike children they are: she explains that observing children is unlike observing insects because observing psychic life is not exactly like observing vegetative life, for psychic life “is so fluid that its characteristics may completely disappear in an unfavourable environment to be replaced by others” (118).

²³ Kathryn Tanner, *Christ the Key* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 42.

²⁴ Ibid., 50.

²⁵ Montessori, *Absorbent Mind*, 25–26.

²⁶ Ibid., 102. For Montessori, “the world” to which the child is porous is the “natural environment” that includes “everything that lies around about him” (102).

²⁷ Montessori, *The Formation of Man*, trans. A. M. Joosten (Oxford: Clío, 1989), 90.

absorbent selves. Yet the child is absorbent, and because the child's nature is radically open, it can wholly absorb culture.²⁸

The distinction between nature and culture on which a romanticization of "natural" childhood or children's nature turns does not hold for Montessori, for she describes children's nature as radically open to culture. What is natural to childhood, according to Montessori, is to absorb the environment, including the social or cultural environment. Children are naturally cultural. This interpretation of "nature" turns on its head Romantic associations of nature with the unformed, the untouched, the uncivilized. A child is "naturally" inculturated, for a child's nature is to resemble her environment just as certain insects resemble leaves.

CHRIST THE KEY TO CHILDHOOD

If one way Montessori might be accused of romanticizing childhood is by valorizing children as closer to nature, another is by associating them with the divine. Montessori consistently reads childhood christologically. Yet the Christ-likeness she affirms in children is not a moral one. Her collection of essays, *The Secret of Childhood*, is filled both with christological readings of children and references to original sin, as are her essays in *The Child in the Church*. Further, attention to Montessori's specific narrations of children as imaging Christ reveals that these descriptions, contrary to what one might expect, illustrate the depth of human sinfulness and illumine life under the conditions of fallenness. In articulating human sinfulness, Montessori diagnoses the particular sins she observes in early and mid-twentieth-century Europe. I do not wish to argue that her exact diagnosis of adult sins against children is correct for twenty-first-century America. (I do think many of the underlying issues turn out to be similar, though expressed very differently—but that is another essay.) What I am interested in is not whether she is right about what our particular sins are but in how the category of sin shows up in Montessori's work—how she sees sin at work and how it is passed down. Below I study sin by looking closely at how Montessori represents children as resembling Christ.

The Newborn as Christ Crucified

The first way a child images Christ, according to Montessori, is by her birth, in which the babe presents Christ crucified. Montessori meditates on the absolute restfulness of life in the womb, the laborlessness of the babe's

²⁸ The formulation from the Council of Trent for how sin is passed down is "by propagation not imitation." I think there is a way to understand Montessori as fitting that description, for it is not that children imitate sin but that they absorb it, and such absorption begins for her in the moment relationship begins for the child: conception. She does not herself, to my knowledge, address this formulation of Trent, but she does explicitly write about the baptism of an infant washing away his original sin. For her discussion of baptism, see *The Child in the Church*, 19.

existence in her mother. She writes, "And now . . . He comes forward. He takes upon himself all labour. He is wounded by light and by sound, tra-vailed in the inmost fibres of his being, and as he advances he gives the great cry: Why has Thou forsaken me?"²⁹ She observes the fatigue, exhaustion, and suffering of the newborn: "His body was compressed, as though in a mill, that squeezed it to the point of displacing its bones. He arrives worn out by the immense contrast between absolute rest and the inconceivable effort of birth."³⁰ She narrates the parents egoistically congratulating themselves on "their" achievement, seeing themselves reflected in the baby's face: "But no one sees in the new-born babe the suffering man, the first image of Christ, pure and incomprehended."³¹ We do not know how to see this image of suffering because we do not know how to receive it. Montessori writes, "We have no real feeling for the new-born baby" as if "for us it is not human."³² She draws the christological parallel more precisely as she concludes the section: "He came into the world, and the world was made by him, but the world knew him not. He came unto his own and his own received him not."³³ We humans can no more receive in hospitality a newborn babe than we could so receive Christ.³⁴

In imaging Christ, the newborn images not Christ's sinlessness, nor Christ's savingness, nor Christ's divinity. She images Christ's entrance into a fallen world. That birth presents as crucifixion discloses the condition of sinfulness that marks life in this world. It means that birth will involve pain and labor and that it ushers children into a world unprepared to receive them. The consequences of such lack of preparation—which is a lack of love—are, in Montessori's philosophy, enormous. The child for her is so sensitive to the environment that "the little child's psychic productivity is stricken to death by the barest shadow of violence."³⁵ What does it mean, then, that children are born into a world that receives them violently? It means that birth is a crucifixion for them.

Though Montessori does not often thematize original sin, this image of the child as the crucified illustrates that she does not shrink from facing the reality and consequences of such sin. At times, she even writes about this dark condition more explicitly as original sin: "Original sin seems an illogical and unjust conception because it envisages the possible condemnation of the innumerable innocents destined to make up humanity, but we may observe a parallel fact, for we find innocent children condemned to bear the fatal consequences of a development distorted by mistakes repeated

²⁹ Montessori, *Secret of Childhood*, 15.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 21.

³⁴ As an analogy for how we should receive the newborn child, she references the priest's reverential handling of the Host (*ibid.*, 20).

³⁵ Montessori, *Absorbent Mind*, 17.

through the ages. The causes of which we treat lie in the conflict that exists at the base of human life, a conflict big with consequences and which has not been sufficiently explored.”³⁶ Montessori propounds an understanding of original sin as passed through “mistakes repeated through the ages,” an environment unprepared to receive children in love. Original sin, for her, is not passed through semen. It is not bequeathed through sex nor any other biological process. It is passed through our inescapably damaged environment. (We might say that it is passed through our biology’s openness to a damaged environment.)

Such a narration resonates, once again, with Tanner’s understanding of sin as passed through deficiency in the environment. For Tanner, we are “perfectly well formed creatures living in an environment that is not good for us.”³⁷ In her analogy, humanity needs an oxygen-rich environment yet is asphyxiating in the sin-transformed, high-altitude one. Yet, for Tanner, original sin is not something that simply happens to us. We are complicit in the sin of our environments: “Of course sin does not make for an unhealthy environment without our cooperation. Sin means that we have chosen an environment for ourselves that is not suitable for our nature; it means we seek for ourselves nourishment that is not good for us. This seems a function of the odd openness of human faculties . . . ; human faculties seem open to what is both good and bad, even for themselves.”³⁸ Montessori’s identification of childhood as the period of high plasticity and her representation of birth as crucifixion delivers an even more sinister interpretation of original sin. Children—infants—absorb sin before they can ever choose it. Children are born into an environment made unhealthy fully without their cooperation. They learn to be sinful at the same time they learn to be. This is the wretched truth of original sin for Montessori. And if one finds it unpalatable to regard sin this way, Montessori points us to the innumerable mistakes and damages children bear throughout the world. In a similar vein, Marcia Bunge reviews in a report by the Child Theology Movement how ruminating on child soldiering and child prostitution transformed the way a group of scholars understood original sin. Montessori might point us to those same truths to illustrate that it should not surprise us that original sin requires children unjustly to bear the damages of sin. That future generations would bear the sins of their forefathers and foremothers was, after all, part of the Edenic curse and reiterated throughout Scripture. And in her portrayal of the painful birth of the child as itself a kind of crucifixion, Montessori connects the Edenic curse with Calvary.

The image of Christ crucified thus emerges from the infant’s nature to absorb and incarnate the environment, which is a fallen world, a world under the curse of pain and sin. The child images Christ taking on all sin on

³⁶ Montessori, *Secret of Childhood*, 158.

³⁷ Tanner, *Christ the Key*, 68.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

the cross as she enters into a world whose violence she is already absorbing. This first, natural birth for Montessori thus images Christ crucified, anticipating thereby the second birth of baptism, a rebirth because it is a baptism into Christ crucified and resurrected. We are born naturally into crucifixion; we are born “from water and from Spirit” into the resurrection of the crucified Christ. Our first birth images the tragedy of Christ’s death; our second, baptismal birth, participates in its fruitfulness.

This connection of birth with rebirth redounds again to the Eden-Calvary connection, which plays out in Montessori’s christological childhood to make one of her most interesting theological interpretations, that the crucifixion redramatizes original sin. The significance of this contribution develops over Montessori’s next two christological reflections.

The Child as Christ Tried

Near the end of *The Secret of Childhood*, Montessori chronicles the everyday abuses of children in early to mid-nineteenth-century Europe and America. She notes ways “the child is condemned to carry his own cross” as “the adult world spends and builds for itself alone.”³⁹ Her tone is prophetic: “When wasteful society has urgent need of money, it takes from the schools and especially from the infant schools [preschools] that shelter the seeds of human life. It takes it from where there are neither arms nor voices to defend it. And therefore this is humanity’s worst crime and most absurd error.”⁴⁰ She goes on to exposit the absurdity of this error, and it would be interesting to consider how her critique still applies to a society crowded with markets for child entertainment and infant safety. But Montessori’s larger point is the way the adult builds a world for adult convenience and adult pleasure and fails to heed the real psychic needs of children. I explore this idea a bit more in the next christological image of children, discussed below, but its import is that it exposes the way children are vulnerable, and we neglect their needs. According to Montessori, parents must save the children, “for in their hands lies positively the future of humanity.”⁴¹ If they do not? Then, according to Montessori, “they will act like Pontius Pilate.”⁴² She anticipates parental objections and puts them into the mouth of Pilate: “What can I do . . . if these are the prevailing customs?” She indicts the parents: “And he washed his hands.” Tragedy prevails. Montessori writes: “Society abandons the child, without feeling the smallest responsibility, to the care of his family and the family, for its part, gives up the child to society which shuts him in school, isolating him from all family control. Thus

³⁹ Montessori, *Secret of Childhood*, 186.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

the child repeats the Passion of Christ driven from Herod to Pilate, tossed between the two powers, who each leave Him to the responsibility of the other."⁴³ The child repeats the Passion of Christ because the parents have become like Pilate, letting social customs prevail over conscience. The child thus prepares to recapitulate the crucifixion of her birth in bearing the inattention to her psychic and physical needs as a child. The position the child is in at this point is very like the position she was in at birth. We may not recognize our current social world in Montessori's descriptions, but her recognition of the vulnerability of children in the vulnerability of Christ before Pilate yields further theological insights about sin.

While presenting birth as crucifixion insinuates that the child is born into a condition of sinfulness—that original sin names the environment in which the child lives—presenting parents as Pilate alleges that original sin is something adults do to children. Not only is birth crucifixion, but we are responsible for it. We adults crucify children in our inattention to sustaining their life. The adult here is implicated in a judgment that the next christological image will flesh out. Indeed, it should not be surprising that one of the few times Montessori speaks explicitly of original sin, she alleges the adult is riddled with it and, therefore, that the educator, often too preoccupied with the child's sin to notice her own, must take out the beam in her own eye as she prepares herself to teach the child.⁴⁴

In this image, Montessori draws the Calvary and Eden connection tighter. She interprets the rejection of Christ at Calvary as a refusal to take responsibility for Christ, the one utterly vulnerable before Pilate, the one who lived out perfect dependence on the Father. In this rejection of vulnerability, this abandonment of the dependent one, Calvary recapitulates Eden, where humans rejected the dependence of creaturely life. If in Eden Adam and Eve rejected their dependence upon God in order to grasp equality with God and thereby disclaimed their status as children of God, in Calvary humanity rejected the one who lived out perfect dependence and perfectly accepted the claims of others who would be dependent on him. Eden and Calvary are attempts to rid ourselves of our creaturely dependence, to be sovereign without love. In original sin we humans claimed independence from the One on whom we depended; in crucifixion we claimed independence from those who depend upon us. Calvary thus both recapitulates and completes the isolating circle of independence begun in Eden. To fail children is to reimage both the Edenic sin and its yet more grotesque form in the sin of Calvary. In the next christological image to be discussed, Montessori wants her listeners and readers to know that they will be accountable for their failure.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 90, 89. Montessori is particularly concerned that the educator root out those sins that most affect her relationship with the child: the deadly sin of anger, made still deadlier when masked in nobility by the deadly sin of pride.

The Child as Christ the Judge

In another christological image, no longer is the child standing trial like Christ before Pilate. This time the child images Christ the Judge, and the adult stands trial. Interpreting the “least of these” identified in the Great Judgment scene of Matthew 25 to include the little ones mentioned seven chapters earlier in Matthew’s gospel, Montessori extends Christ’s words that what was done to the little child was done to him. For Montessori, Christ reveals that he was the child.

She builds on this reading by chastising adults who believe that it is they who love the child and the child who must be taught to love. Montessori deflates this egoistic illusion by professing the child the better lover. The child, she points out, always wants the adult to be near—delights in the adult.⁴⁵ For those without eyes to see, Montessori makes this love visible and concrete. The child calls to the beloved adult in the night, begging her not to leave him; the nursing baby wants just to watch his parents eat dinner even though he will not eat himself.⁴⁶ “The adult,” she says, “passes by this mystical love without perceiving it.”⁴⁷ And then, Montessori asks, who will love us with the simple desire for our presence that young children possess? Who will say as he goes to bed, in words that echo Gethsemane, “Stay with me”? No, for Montessori children need not be taught how to love. Rather, adults must learn how to receive children’s love. For we adults often do not receive it. She writes: “We defend ourselves against this love that will pass away, and we shall never find anything to equal it. We in our turmoil say, ‘I haven’t time, I can’t, I have a lot to do,’ and we think in our hearts, ‘The child must be taught better, or he will make us his slaves.’ What we want is to be free from him to do what we ourselves like doing, so as not to give up our convenience.”⁴⁸ We do not wholly want this love that so wholly demands us: our presence, our attention, our possessions. We want our convenience, comfort, and pleasure. Our turmoil measures for us our lovelessness. We in our turmoil are so perverted by sin that we cannot rightly receive the love of children, and we justify our refusal of love as properly forming those whom we deny. Montessori’s observations of children disclose the depth of our depravity, the way sin has sunk its grip into our hearts through years of habit and acquiescence. This is a major difference between adult and child sinfulness, one that allows Montessori to insist that the child is “more or less free from sin.”⁴⁹ The child’s heart might absorb and incarnate the evil around her, but it is not yet gripped by years of sinful habits. The child, while lack-

⁴⁵ In one talk in *The Absorbent Mind*, Montessori interprets the absorbent self as imaging to us the love of 1 Corinthians 13 (292).

⁴⁶ Montessori, *Secret of Childhood*, 81.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 83.

⁴⁹ Montessori, *Child in the Church*, 46.

ing the adult forms of freedom, also has a freedom the adult lacks. Even though sinful, she is not enslaved to sin in the way sinful adults are.

Such adult enslavement to sin is expressed in our defense against children. Although we deeply love our children, we have what she calls “an instinct of defence against [them].”⁵⁰ This instinct, she elaborates, is one of avarice. We defend our possessions against the child, determined that “the baby shall not soil me, shall not be a nuisance. Defence against him!”⁵¹ According to Montessori, adults build the world for adults and leave children to make their way in it.⁵² Even the toys we give them are more often for our own convenience—a failure, in Montessori’s philosophy, to help the child into the meaningful work of building herself.⁵³ We in our turmoil are determined greedily to horde the possessions, the empire that we have accumulated for ourselves.⁵⁴ The child, against whom adults defend themselves, becomes a “prisoner of a civilization that has been built up by adults for the good of adults” and that tends to leave “less and less room for the freedom of the child.”⁵⁵

Montessori’s understanding of the poverty of our love for children as a vice of greed and self-protection prepares for her inclusion of children in “the least of these” in Matthew 25. She meditates on Jesus’s words to the lost. Because these people did not feed the hungry, cover the naked, or visit the sick and imprisoned, Jesus responds, “Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of the least, neither did you do it to me.”⁵⁶ But Montessori asserts that we should understand the Christ who is hidden in every impoverished person to be likewise present to us in the child. She narrates an imagined eschatological scene:

⁵⁰ Montessori, *Secret of Childhood*, 18.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵² It is quite literally true that the world is built for adults, and one of Montessori’s great contributions to education was in promoting child-sized desks, chairs, and writing implements. What might it look like if churches followed suit? What if they had, in the very front of the church where it is easiest to see, child-sized pews and kneeler so that this sensory creature, the child, could more fully participate?

⁵³ She also writes, “Grown-ups, however much they love a child, feel an irresistible instinct to defend themselves from him. This complex, anxious, defensive attitude conflicts with the love by which the grown-up believes that the child’s presence gives him the greatest joy, and that he himself is ready to make every sacrifice, in utter self-surrender” (*ibid.*, 56).

⁵⁴ Attendant upon such greed is also the treating of the child as a possession. Montessori expounds what this means: Parents “consider him too much as a possession and treat him as such. Now they consider that the child should be what *they* wish him to be. Children ought to find pleasure in and be interested in what their parents choose to impose on them. They should be pleased with an environment created exclusively to suit the interests and practical comfort of adults. Parents now pay less attention to what the child needs for his spiritual development than what will ‘make him good and keep still’” (Montessori, *Child in the Church*, 10). And also: “In certain sections of society the child has come to be regarded merely as a possession, to be acquired or not according to one’s own inclination” (11).

⁵⁵ Montessori, *Secret of Childhood*, 59.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

"I loved you, I came to waken you in the morning, and you drove Me away."

"Lord, when did You ever come into our house in the morning to waken us? And when did we drive You away?"

"The child that was born of you, who came to summon you, was I. The child who begged you not to leave him, was I."

Foolish ones that we are! It was the Messiah! It was the Messiah coming to waken us and to teach us how to love. And we saw only a child's naughtiness and so we have lost our hearts.⁵⁷

We stand under the judgment of Christ who was hidden in the child (and revealed as a child). We reject this Christ as we reject the other marginalized of the world: the poor, the hungry, the sick, the imprisoned. We fail to attend to the vulnerable, rejecting love in favor of sovereignty of the self. The independence of God that we grasped at Eden and that we grasped again in rejection of the vulnerable one at Calvary we have also continually grasped in our indifference to the needs and vulnerability of the little christs around us. And as we shall be held accountable for failing the least of these who were hungry, sick, naked, and imprisoned, so we shall be held accountable for failing the least of these who were children. Here Montessori helps us to see how a major theme throughout Scripture—care for the vulnerable—links original sin, Eden, Calvary, and the Great Judgment. This claim for independence not only stands under judgment but, as Montessori also helps us to see, is illusory. For her, not only does the child depend upon the adult but the adult depends upon the child, inasmuch as the child is "the father of man."⁵⁸ She writes that adults and children depend upon each other in different ways.⁵⁹ Our dependence upon those so vulnerable to our own violence should be worrisome. What does our everyday violence against children do to humanity? Montessori explains that our blindness to children forms adults weaker than they might otherwise be.⁶⁰

We see here that original sin is passed not just through the environment, not just through the sin of adults, but through the specific sin of oppressing the marginalized. Such oppression, which often takes the form of neglect, is how we attempt to enact the myth of our own independence and so deny Christ. Then, in denying the Christ who comes to us in the child, we pass on the sin of Christ-denial to our children. In loving them too little, in failing to live into their love, we damage and distort their love. Before they have

⁵⁷ Ibid., 83.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁹ Montessori writes: "We, as adults, are *dependent* on [the child]. We are the sons and dependents of the child in the sphere of his work, as he is our son and dependent in the sphere of our work. One is dependent in one sphere, the other in another. The adult is master in one sphere, but the child is master in his own sphere. And thus the one depends on the other; they are both kings, but each with his own kingdom" (ibid., 164).

⁶⁰ Montessori, *Absorbent Mind*, 78.

grown into their freedom, we in our turmoil have made them accomplices in our betrayal of Christ.

Our lovelessness and its significance might paralyze us, but Montessori makes as an axiom of education friendliness with error. Even while dwelling on the darkness of our failure to love the Christ who comes to us in children, she suggests a more hopeful aspect to this image. Christ comes to us in the child! There are redemptive possibilities for us in this good news, which brings me to the final christological image of children that I will explore.

The Child as Christ the Redeemer

The child who seeks to wake us in our slumbers offers to us a still brighter wakefulness. Adults, who have a tendency to sleep through the mysteries of life, can be “stir[red] . . . and sustain[ed]” with “a fresh and living energy that they have long lost.”⁶¹ The child wakens us to the life we have forgotten, the life of love. This is not a sentimentalization of the goodness of children, for Montessori. It speaks to children’s different motivations: children are motivated internally by the need to build the adult, and adults are motivated by external goals. Children may climb stairs for the sheer pleasure of mastering the art of climbing stairs, while adults climb stairs because they have left something on the second floor. The adult needs to be awakened by the child, not because the child is morally superior to the adult but because the adult has constructed a world that is out of balance, that is driven by adults and their external goals, their functionalism. In the child, humanity may glimpse the possibility for a life beyond the strivings, competitions, and oppressions of adult life. Montessori writes:

The child should live in an environment of beauty, in which man expresses his loftiest forms of art, an art that is not contaminated or determined by any outward need, in which an impulse of generous love stores up riches that cannot be utilized in the world of production. Are there places where man feels the need to suspend and forget his usual characteristics, where he perceives that the essential thing that maintains life is something other than struggle? Where he perceives as a truth rising from the deep that to oppress others is not the secret of survival or the important thing in life, but of purely individual concern? Where therefore a surrender of self seems truly life-giving? Is there no place where the soul aspires to break through the iron laws that hold it bound to the world of outward things? . . . It is on this road that salvation lies.⁶²

⁶¹ Montessori, *Secret of Childhood*, 83.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 177. We might see here why Romano Guardini, who insisted on understanding the liturgy on the model of art or the play of children, would be drawn to Montessori. Guardini mentions Montessori in his catechetical text *Sacred Signs* and draws an analogy between liturgy and children at play in the opening to his book *Spirit of the Liturgy* (New York: Crossroad, 1998).

The road to salvation lies in the beginnings of freedom from the world of production because such freedom stands apart from conquest and opens the way for “a renewal of life, as it was a resurrection from the weight of the world.”⁶³ How might we be so freed, so renewed? By heeding “the divine voice that no one can still, and which calls men with a loud voice, calling them together to gather round the child.”⁶⁴

Through and in relation to children, adults may recover a purposefulness that is not mere functionalism. The child is purposeful; she works. That the child works is central to Montessori’s educational philosophy, and it establishes the basis for her analogy of the children revolution to the worker revolution. As Marx and Marxists agitated for the rights of the worker, so Montessori wants to thicken such advocacy by promoting not just ones who work for “external things” but the ones whose work “produces mankind itself”—the work of the child.⁶⁵ And so the adult and the child need each other and their two different kinds of work. As Montessori writes, “Grownups and children must join their forces.”⁶⁶ The child images the divine voice—Jesus who wakens, Christ the redeemer—because the child in her alternate form of human life opens us to the life and love, that we, mired in our oppressions, have forgotten. Even as the child absorbs and incarnates the violence infecting the oppression-sick environment, the child’s very openness to the environment, that radical plasticity by which she absorbs the environment that becomes part of her, can awaken the adult to an openness of her own spirit. We can become so wrapped up in achieving the goals of our external world that we fail to see our oppressions; we use the world to achieve what we want but are closed to it. The child can awaken us again to the openness that love requires. Through the child we can learn how to love better, yet the irony, for Montessori, is that we adults think the child must be taught love and that we need to convert the child. Did not Christ himself, Montessori points out, tell the adults that we must be converted to be like the little child? Is it not in such conversion that our hope to enter the kingdom lies?

A MONTESSORIAN APPROACH TO ORIGINAL SIN
AND THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

I have tried to argue not only that Montessori has an understanding of original sin and the sinfulness of children—thus disabusing readers of Romanticist interpretations of her work—but also that she offers a sophisticated account of original sin precisely because she attends to children. Young children, she observes, are porous. They naturally absorb the envi-

⁶³ Montessori, *Secret of Childhood*, 177.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Montessori, *Absorbent Mind*, 16, and *Secret of Childhood*, 180–81.

⁶⁶ Montessori, *Absorbent Mind*, 293.

ronment and then come to resemble our sin-filled world as sin is passed environmentally by the oppression of the marginalized and particularly the oppression of children by adults. She is thus able to articulate the way we are responsible for sin (we adults create the environment) and yet how such sin is beyond us (children absorb such sin before they can choose it and so create deficient adults to create this deficient environment). Through her christological meditations on children, Montessori draws together Eden, Calvary, and the Great Judgment to present children as both infected with the violence of sin and as sources of hope for living beyond such violence. The linking of Eden, Calvary, and the Great Judgment, moreover, helps us to understand original sin as a quest for an isolating kind of independence that denies both our dependence and our dependents. Such sin is a continual grasping at independence from God and from those who make claims on us and our property.

What can we say, at this point, of the original quotation from Montessori that scientific treatment yields at three years of age a model individual? Only that a "model individual," while perhaps a healthy one, cannot mean for her a sinless one, and that if scientific treatment means (as it must, for Montessori) treatment in accordance with the needs and nature of the child, it will be impossible to achieve wholly to the extent that the environment of the child includes the world and the adult. In such a way might this quotation be interpreted to be consistent with Montessori's descriptions of children's nature and Christ-likeness. Yet, I confess to finding this interpretation less than satisfying. The smell of progressive faith in science and history cannot quite be washed out of this quotation. What happened at this moment of her lecture when she said this? Did she get carried away by the promise of her own educational alternative? Did she slip into a marketing moment, hyperbolizing what her school can deliver? Or does she inadvertently point to an irreducible contradiction at the heart of her own project, namely, that she at times claimed for her educational program more than her theological commitments should enable her to claim?

These questions about the consistency of Montessori's philosophy are not the only ones she leaves us with, nor are they the most interesting. Montessori's observations of sin and Christ in the child open up a number of questions and lines of thought that might be pursued. How might Montessori, for example, extend, critique, or revise the insight that for the adult world to be in balance with the child world, adults must not only refrain from oppressing children but must refrain from suppressing their own childhood? This question of adults suppressing their childhood opens up important vistas in philosophical theology. Stanley Cavell has pointed to Descartes's lament that our knowledge is insecure because we are born as children in order to propose that it is because they suppress childhood that philosophers demand inhuman security of their knowledge. Karl Rahner has articulated a theme of childhood similar to Montessori's openness and

plasticity to contend that adults need to recoup a “mature childhood” in which they regain the perpetual openness of their biological childhood. Hans Urs von Balthasar has contended that the dependence of children might help adults learn to live into their utter dependence on God as God’s children. How might Montessori’s insights on vulnerability and independence contribute to this conversation about what it means for adults to be converted to childhood? Montessori is particularly subtle here because she does not reject all kinds of independence—the entire Montessori environment, after all, is purposed toward respecting and extending the independence of the child. But she is suspicious of understandings of independence that deny the adult’s dependence on the child and the child’s dependence on the adult. Independence and dependence, like childhood and adulthood, exist in a complex interrelation that could speak profoundly to the adult’s conversion to childhood.

These considerations, in turn, raise further important questions about freedom. The plasticity of the child who must learn to become the Christ she images intimates the inadequacy of a purely negative account of freedom. For Montessori, the child who is infinitely plastic, who may become anything, does not possess the fullness of freedom; on the contrary, she is at the mercy of the environment. She is often even, for Montessori, a “prisoner” of civilization, and she has not even the freedom to assess and reject the toxins in her environment.⁶⁷ While the child does possess some freedom—including more freedom from the grip of sin than the adult—the fullness of freedom is, for Montessori, the consequence of development and must be won by constant toil. Yet how is this freedom distinct from the diseased independence that we grasp in our sin? And how does the anemic freedom of infinite plasticity relate to the fullness of freedom? For Montessori, different freedoms name different forms of dependence and independence internal to them, and so the interweavings of independence and dependence open up into a rich and variegated understanding of freedom(s).

I raise these questions and thoughts now not to resolve them, obviously, but to press again two of my central arguments: that Montessori is a thinker worthy of serious theological study and that reflection on children ought to be central to theological anthropology. Childhood is constitutive of what it means to be human, and so to learn what it means to be a human, we must learn what it means to be a child. And there are few people who have spoken as eloquently or written as powerfully about what it means to be a child as Maria Montessori.

⁶⁷ Montessori, *Secret of Childhood*, 59.

Wittgenstein's Web: Hans Frei and the Meaning of Biblical Narratives*

John Allan Knight / Marist College

In an important recent book, Jason Springs gives an erudite and nuanced interpretation of Hans Frei's theological project. In *Toward a Generous Orthodoxy*, Springs argues against what he takes to be the "prevailing belief that Frei's theology divides neatly into two distinct periods, the 'early' and 'later' Freis."¹ According to the "prevailing belief," Frei turned from a reliance on New Criticism, in which the meaning of biblical narratives is to be extracted from the text of the narratives "in themselves" (i.e., from their structure), to a reliance on Wittgenstein's later thought (under the influence of George Lindbeck), in which the meaning of the narratives is constituted by their use in the community.² There are (at least) two reasons for Springs's opposition to the "prevailing belief." First, he argues that Frei had read the later Wittgenstein and had been appropriating his insights early in his career, well before the publication of *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* in 1974.³ Thus, Wittgenstein was influential in Frei's work throughout his career and not only in the latter part. In my own judgment, Springs is quite right on this point.⁴

* I would like to thank Jurgis Brakas, Melody Knowles, James Snyder, and the anonymous reviewers, who generously read and made thoughtful and very helpful comments on earlier drafts of this essay. I would also like to thank Kelli Gardner, whose careful reading was also very helpful. Any errors or omissions, of course, remain my own responsibility.

¹ Jason A. Springs, *Toward a Generous Orthodoxy: Prospects for Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 18 (subsequent references to Springs are to this source). Spring cites Dan Stiver, *The Philosophy of Religious Language* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 143–45, in support of this position.

² Springs, 18.

³ Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974). Frei does indeed refer to Wittgenstein's later thought several times in *The Eclipse* and states that his critique of Schleiermacher and the hermeneutic tradition is indebted to Charles Wood's PhD dissertation, which relied on Wittgenstein to critique the hermeneutic tradition from Schleiermacher to Gadamer, and which Frei judged to be "brilliant" (342 n. 1). See Charles M. Wood, "Theory and Religious Understanding: A Critique of the Hermeneutics of Joachim Wach" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1972).

⁴ I argue this point in John Allan Knight, *Liberalism versus Postliberalism: The Great Divide in Twentieth-Century Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Second, he argues that Frei's later work is not as heavily reliant on Wittgenstein as is commonly thought. According to Springs, Frei's "later writing does not forgo textual constraints exerted by Scripture in order to comply with the (markedly un-Wittgensteinian) slogan injudiciously extracted from Wittgenstein's later work and taken to encapsulate a Wittgensteinian theory of meaning—that of 'meaning as use.'"⁵ Indeed, it might reasonably be objected that Wittgenstein quite intentionally did not formulate any theory of meaning at all in his later work, whether a use theory or otherwise. On the contrary, Wittgenstein came to understand any theorizing at all about language to be a philosophical mistake. And in fact Frei follows Wittgenstein in this antitheoretical orientation, at least on my reading. But this is not Springs's objection. Instead, he sets out "to demonstrate that even at his most explicitly 'cultural-linguistic,' Frei did not collapse meaning into use."⁶ Consequently, in Springs's view, Frei's earlier and later works exhibit a continuity strong enough to eclipse completely any putative shift. Further, if I am reading him properly, Springs argues that even in his later work it is a mistake to think of Frei as a "card-carrying" Wittgensteinian on the meaning of biblical narratives, despite Wittgenstein's substantial influence.⁷ Springs's reading of Frei is subtle and erudite, but in the end I cannot agree with his second argument. Indeed, I have argued elsewhere that Frei's approach to the meaning of biblical narratives is thoroughly Wittgensteinian. So what I want to do in this essay is to explore in what sense Springs and I disagree about Frei's relationship to Wittgenstein.

I agree with Springs that Frei relies on Wittgenstein throughout his entire career. Even in his earlier work, he makes extensive use of the notions of the literal sense and community use. Wittgenstein is influential, and the "literal sense" is indeed operative, in Frei's work from beginning to end. Thus, I agree with Springs that Frei does not turn from "the text itself" to Wittgenstein.⁸ His later understanding, though perhaps no more influenced by Wittgenstein than his earlier work, remains in my view thoroughly Wittgensteinian. Springs is right that Frei (no doubt intentionally) did not develop any "Wittgensteinian theory of meaning," but that very refusal to theorize is a refusal shared by Wittgenstein himself. Unlike Springs, though, I think it not injudicious to take the later Wittgenstein to understand meaning as use. Consequently, in his later work Frei's Wittgensteinian affinities

⁵ Springs, 18.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 50.

⁸ But Frei himself acknowledges that his earlier work was too reliant on Anglo-American New Criticism, and, when he realizes this, he turns away from it. Thus, though he does not turn from the literal sense or from "the text itself" to Wittgenstein, he does shift his understanding of what the literal sense is. Contrary to Springs, in my view Frei did indeed make a turn in his later work—a turn from one understanding of the literal sense to another. See my *Liberalism versus Postliberalism*, 207–9.

become even clearer. Though his primary loyalty is to Barth, Frei's reading of Barth and Wittgenstein together convinced him that (at least one way) to be a good Barthian is to be a good Wittgensteinian. Thus Frei did, in fact, come to regard meaning as constituted by use: quoting Lindbeck, Frei is persuaded that "meaning is constituted by the uses of a specific language rather than being distinguished from it."⁹ At least on my own view, with respect to the meaning of religious and biblical language, in the end Frei is about as close to Wittgenstein as a theologian can be. I will be arguing here that the best way to read Springs's views on Frei's relationship to Wittgenstein requires a distinction between regarding meaning as "constituted" by use and "collapsing" meaning into use.¹⁰

I

Elsewhere I have given a more detailed treatment of Wittgenstein, why I think the dominant reading of his views of linguistic meaning is the best reading, and what I take to be some serious problems with such views.¹¹ So here I will simply give a brief summary of his later views to orient the essay. Early in his career, Wittgenstein ascribed to what he called a "picture theory" of meaning that presupposed that the logical structure of language mirrors the structure of reality. But after publishing the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein gradually came to believe it impossible to demonstrate that language mirrors reality sufficiently to make a truth-conditional or referential (or "descriptivist") theory of meaning defensible. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein describes why he has rejected his former view and has come to believe that a good deal of language is not descriptive or referential and that even the parts that do have referential or descriptive functions are not completely referential or descriptive.¹² Consequently, language cannot acquire its meaning from its ability to describe or refer to some part or aspect of the world. Instead, language gets its meaning from the role(s) it plays in an agreed pattern of usage that structures some significant and intelligible part of our lives.

⁹ Hans W. Frei, "The 'Literal Reading' of Biblical Narrative in the Christian Tradition: Does It Stretch or Will It Break?" in *The Bible and the Narrative Tradition*, ed. Frank McConnell (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 36–77; reprinted in Hans Frei, *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays*, ed. George Hunsinger and William C. Placher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 117–52 (future page references are to repr. ed.), quoted passage at 147 (quoting George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984], 114).

¹⁰ The extent to which regarding meaning as "constituted" by use amounts to "collapsing" meaning into use is an issue I will address in Sec. III of this essay.

¹¹ See my *Liberalism versus Postliberalism*, 139–48, 245–50.

¹² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 3rd ed., trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, n.d.). Here again, I am following the excellent discussion of Scott Soames in *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 2, *The Age of Meaning* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 3–27.

What reorients Wittgenstein's later views on language is a shift in his understanding of the purpose of language. Wittgenstein's later work rejects the notion that the primary use of language is to state a fact, to describe a state of affairs, or to predicate a property of some object. Instead, the most important use of language is to coordinate words and actions—when we speak to one another, the purpose of the language we use is to facilitate our interactions so that we can accomplish certain purposes.¹³

Wittgenstein's central arguments in his critique of the *Tractatus's* descriptivism consist in four important points.¹⁴ First, the crucial element in linguistic meaning is the coordination of language use with action. That is, the use of language to facilitate actions or practices is conceptually primary, and it is prior to using language to name or describe things. Second, precisely because this coordination of language use with action is primary, language users must have some skill at it before they will be able to engage in associating names or descriptive predicates with objects in the world. Third, different instances of naming, referring, and describing will not always be the same kind of activity. Thus, the use of names or other expressions will carry different meanings both when used in different contexts and when used for different linguistic purposes. Fourth, descriptivists are wrong to try to explain linguistic competence through the association of expressions with objects. Instead, substantial linguistic competence must already be in place before a speaker will be able to associate an expression with an object. In other words, mastery of a language has less to do with the skill at associating expressions with objects in the world than with skill at using a set of social and linguistic practices to coordinate their actions.¹⁵

Crucial to speakers' ability to use language to coordinate their actions are the rules established by their community for the way language should be properly used in various forms of life.¹⁶ In the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein rejects the notion that the meaning of a sentence (atomic or otherwise)

¹³ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 2, 6–21.

¹⁴ Here I am following Soames's useful summary in *The Age of Meaning*, 23.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Here I follow the lead of Saul Kripke's short volume, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (1982; repr., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). Kripke's "skeptical" interpretation of the "rule-following paradox" in the *Investigations* is highly contested. See, e.g., Elizabeth Anscombe, "Critical Notice of Saul A. Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 15 (1985): 103–9; P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Connections and Controversies* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 268–309; John McDowell, "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule," *Synthese* 58 (1984): 325–63, and "Meaning and Intentionality in Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy," in "The Wittgenstein Legacy," special issue, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 17 (1992): 40–52; George M. Wilson, "Semantic Realism and Kripke's Wittgenstein," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 58, no. 1 (1998): 99–122; Crispin Wright, "Kripke's Account of the Argument against Private Language," *Journal of Philosophy* 81, no. 12 (1984): 759–78. Nonetheless, though it seems that no interpretation of Wittgenstein goes uncontested in the literature, the descriptions I am giving in this section are sufficiently general to abstract from Kripke's interpretation of the paradox and his proposed solution. I therefore judge these general remarks to be relatively uncontroversial. See, e.g., Soames, *The Age of Meaning*, 1–62; Hans Sluga, "Ludwig Wittgenstein: Life and Work; An Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, ed.

consists in the possible fact or state of affairs that it describes and to which it refers. Instead of asking about possible facts, in his later work he makes two other inquiries: First, under what conditions may this sentence be appropriately asserted? Second, what role does our practice of asserting the sentence play in our lives? Thus, he will say, "Don't think, look!" or, as Frei paraphrases, don't ask for the meaning, ask for the use.¹⁷ This redirection that Wittgenstein effects in the *Investigations* is central to his rejection of the project of the *Tractatus*. If asking about meaning requires asking about truth conditions, then an assertion that a person means something by what she says is meaningless. But no such conclusion follows if we replace inquiries about truth conditions with those suggested in the *Investigations*. In that case, all that is required for a sentence to have meaning is that there be roughly specifiable circumstances under which it may legitimately be uttered (either spoken or written) and that the game that involves its utterance play a role in our lives. And to ask about the role that an utterance plays and the conditions under which it can play that role is to ask about what rule we follow in uttering it.¹⁸

Three components of following a rule are critical to Wittgenstein's understanding of linguistic meaning. First, the agreement of the community as to its practices is essential. The game of ascribing rules and concepts to each other would fall apart in the absence of such agreement. Second, the rules on which we agree, and the way in which they interact with our practices, constitutes our form of life. For Wittgenstein, our form of life is just a given; it is a brute fact that must be simply accepted, and it is in the context of our form of life that the agreement of the community is enacted.

Hans Sluga and David G. Stern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1–33; Barry Stroud, "Mind, Meaning and Practice," in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, 296–319; Norman Malcolm, *Wittgensteinian Themes: Essays 1978–1989*, ed. Georg Henrik von Wright (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), esp. 145–81; Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973). Having said that, some of my disagreement with Springs may be attributable to the somewhat differing lenses through which we read Wittgenstein. So far as I can tell, Springs's reading is influenced most by Robert Brandom, *Making It Explicit* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Sabina Lovibond, *Realism and Imagination in Ethics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983); and Fergus Kerr, *Theology after Wittgenstein*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1997). These are excellent interpreters of Wittgenstein, though in my judgment they are more concerned to use Wittgenstein for their own constructive (pragmatist in the case of Brandom and Lovibond) ends than simply to interpret Wittgenstein for its own sake (a completely legitimate project, to be sure). My own reading is more indebted to ordinary language philosophy, for two reasons. First, I take this to be the majority view of Wittgenstein's later philosophy of language among analytic philosophers of language not themselves committed to Wittgenstein. Second, whether this is the best reading of Wittgenstein is somewhat beside the point in interpreting Frei, because I take Frei himself to read Wittgenstein through Gilbert Ryle and ordinary language philosophy. See below nn. 77–88 and accompanying text.

¹⁷ Hans W. Frei, "Theology and the Interpretation of Narrative: Some Hermeneutical Considerations," in *Theology and Narrative*, 94–116, esp. 104.

¹⁸ As Robert Brandom notes, Wittgenstein uses "rule" very broadly, and Brandom identifies at least three distinct senses (*Making It Explicit*, 64–66). The description in the text I judge to be broad enough to encompass any of the three.

Third, there must be criteria by which the community judges whether one of its members is following the rule in question. These criteria must be outward and observable; that is, they must be public criteria. They need not in all cases be exhaustively specifiable in advance. In practice, they are applied on an ad hoc basis. Thus, to ask about the meaning of a word or a sentence is to ask about the rules for using the word or sentence and its usefulness in the community's form of life. On the other hand, to ask about the reference of a word or a sentence is to ask about its truth conditions, and Wittgenstein (like Frei) is convinced that truth conditions cannot yield meaning.¹⁹ Consequently, my own view is that the later Wittgenstein did in fact understand the meaning of a sentence simply to be its use (or uses) in a form of life. That use, of course, proceeded according to a set of rules determined by the language game that structured the understanding of the form of life.

II

Springs is right in my view to argue that Frei's earlier work is indeed influenced by the later Wittgenstein, especially as he is interpreted by Gilbert Ryle and other ordinary language philosophers. It is certainly true, as Springs argues, that Frei's overriding intention was not to be a Wittgensteinian but to be a faithful Barthian, and in my own judgment he largely succeeded. From the time of his PhD dissertation, Frei identified three Barthian themes designed to move Barth's theological thinking away from its anthropological starting point.²⁰ These themes from Barth guided Frei's work throughout his career, including his early work, and his constructive work sought to be faithful to these themes.²¹ Again, I have given a fairly

¹⁹ One might ask whether it is appropriate to set up such a stark opposition between meaning as use in a form of life and meaning as truth conditions. Don't meaning, reference, and truth all play a role in the act of understanding? Clearly, they all do play such a role. But it is important to distinguish epistemological issues from semantic ones and to distinguish both from ontological issues concerning the concept of truth. Frei saw clearly that the meaning of a sentence (or by extension, a narrative or parts of it) cannot be constituted by a referential function. Reference is accomplished (or not) by referring expressions, and these expressions play a role in determining the meaning of the sentences in which they occur. Failure to distinguish adequately between issues concerning truth and those concerning meaning got Frei into difficulties in his debate with Carl Henry. For discussion, see my *Liberalism versus Postliberalism*, 253–76.

²⁰ See Hans Wilhelm Frei, "The Doctrine of Revelation in the Thought of Karl Barth, 1909–1922: The Nature of Barth's Break with Liberalism" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1956).

²¹ In Barth's view, one of the things that made liberal theology subject to Feuerbach's critique was that it began by setting out epistemic criteria and then refused to make claims that could not meet these criteria. After the break, Barth insists that theology must begin with ontological affirmations about God, and these affirmations are given in the Incarnation and the testimony to it in the Bible. Frei makes a very similar move in insisting on the priority of the biblical narratives in theology. Biblical narratives give us positive affirmations about God. The second theme is closely related to the first and concerns theological method. After the break, Barth insists that theological method must be subordinate to, and be governed by, positive

detailed reading of Frei's work elsewhere, so here I will only summarize in a general way.

Frei took Barth to be right that most Protestant theologians in the modern period had indeed departed from these themes and thus were misguided. But it was Wittgenstein, along with Gilbert Ryle and Erich Auerbach, who allowed Frei to articulate just why they were misguided. And his analysis and critique of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theological hermeneutics was thoroughly Wittgensteinian.²² In Frei's view, modern theology's wrong turn was accomplished via several culprits that play the role of recurrent villains in Frei's narrative. These villains are apologetics, the prominence of historical-critical investigation, confusion of the meaning of biblical (and other) texts with notions of reference and a derivation of the understanding of meaning from a (Lockean) theory of knowledge. These villains were mutually related and worked together to thwart any Barthian shift of theology's anthropological starting point. On my reading, Frei took the confusion regarding the meaning of biblical narratives to be the most fundamental problem, in the following sense. Modern liberal theologians assumed a referential theory of meaning by which not only words but sentences and indeed the stories themselves have meaning only insofar as they are able to "refer" or point to entities or states of affairs outside the text itself. Frei often called this understanding of meaning "meaning-as-reference," and he takes it to be contrary to the nature of the biblical stories themselves, as well as being indefensible in its own terms. Frei took it to be the most fundamental problem because it could thwart the development of the themes he identified in his study of Barth.²³ It is this to which Frei devotes the sub-

ontological statements about God. It is easy to see that this insistence is derived from Barth's prioritizing of ontology over epistemology. It implies as well that theology cannot be truly systematic, because Barth believes that all true systematizing will be anthropologically and epistemologically driven. Frei likewise insists that theological method must be governed by the revelation of God given in the biblical narratives. The third theme concerns the interpretation of the biblical texts. Barth insists that interpretive method must be governed by his methodological commitments and his ontological affirmations about God. I have argued for Frei's identification of these themes in John Allan Knight, "The Barthian Heritage of Hans Frei," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 61, no. 3 (August 2008): 307–26. See also my *Liberalism versus Post-liberalism*, 125–38.

²² I should note here that Frei's concerns do not align precisely with Wittgenstein's. Whereas Wittgenstein is concerned more with the meaning of sentences, Frei is concerned with the interpretation of larger semantic units—narrative texts. They also obviously address and are situated within quite different intellectual and interpretive traditions. Nor is either of them particularly interested in contributing to the tradition in which the other works. My contention is simply that Frei is about as Wittgensteinian as one could ask of a theologian working in Frei's context.

²³ The importance of this understanding of meaning for Frei is highlighted by the fact that his most substantial single work, *The Eclipse*, is devoted to charting the establishment of the hegemony of this understanding in modern theology. The importance Frei placed on "meaning-as-reference" is evidenced by the consistency with which he uses it to criticize modern Protestant theologians and biblical interpreters. Whether he is discussing Anthony Collins or supernaturalists, mythophiles such as D. F. Strauss, or biblical theologians such as J. P. Gabler,

stantial majority of space in *The Eclipse*, and it is this critique that clearly shows the influence of Wittgenstein. Because a Wittgensteinian view of meaning-as-use was the only alternative available to Frei, he opted for Wittgenstein's alternative. Indeed, in my view, Frei's discussions of the meaning of the biblical narratives imply that to be a consistent Barthian one must be (or at least it helps to be) a Wittgensteinian when it comes to language.

Frei's later work in my view does give evidence of a shift in his thinking.²⁴ But Springs is correct that it is misleading to say simply that he moved from "the text itself" to Wittgenstein.²⁵ Yet his later work does show Wittgenstein's influence at least as clearly, if not more so, than his early work. His colleague George Lindbeck argues that first-order religious claims derive their meaning from their use in the community's religious life (its form of life), and this use is regulated by the grammatical rules (language games) known as doctrines. The community is given a similar role in Frei's shift in emphasis from the literal sense as embodied in Scripture's narrative form to a different understanding of the literal sense. Frei discusses his understanding of the literal sense and its importance for theology in a series of essays published or presented from 1982 until 1987.²⁶ He argues that for centuries theology has proceeded in two forms or types, or at least in two contexts.²⁷ In the first, theology is the "queen of the sciences," providing unity and purpose to all other disciplines. In this context, theology is philosophical discourse about God (*logos* about *theos*), and its initial and most important task, on Frei's construal, is to show how the word "God" and the concept it represents refers to a (indeed, the) Divine Being.²⁸ The concept itself can only be intelligible in the context of an overarching philosophical scheme. This is because philosophy is not only a discipline in its own right but is in addition a foundational discipline, providing an all-fields-encompassing set of criteria that adjudicate what counts as meaningful language, rational belief, and knowledge.²⁹ Thus, reflection on religious phenomena or ideas must be grounded in a foundational philosophical theory. Frei takes the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur and David Tracy to be just such a theory. On Frei's reading, it sets out transcendental conditions of the

Pietists or Wolffians, Ritschl or Harnack, Herder, Schleiermacher, or Hegel, Frei emphasizes that their fundamental mistake was to take the meaning of the biblical narratives as constituted by their ability to refer to some possible state of affairs (i.e., some descriptive sense). I argue for this point both with respect to Frei, *The Eclipse*, and *The Identity of Jesus Christ: The Hermeneutical Bases of Dogmatic Theology* (1975; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), in my *Liberalism versus Postliberalism*, 157–98.

²⁴ See my *Liberalism versus Postliberalism*, 199–224.

²⁵ See Springs, 18.

²⁶ See my *Liberalism versus Postliberalism*, 205–24.

²⁷ Frei, "Theology and the Interpretation of Narrative," 94–116.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 95. One can see this explicitly in Schubert Ogden's essay, "The Reality of God," in *The Reality of God and Other Essays* (1966; repr., Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1992).

²⁹ Frei, "Theology and the Interpretation of Narrative," 95.

possibility of human subjectivity within which the “fusion of horizons” that constitutes understanding a text can occur.³⁰ That is, it provides interpretation with truth conditions.³¹

But if Wittgenstein is right, this project can never be successful, precisely because it assumes that the terms that constitute an interpretation of a text are given meaning not by the community (the church) but by their transcendental truth conditions. Instead, Frei argues that a more excellent way to do theology (the second form or type) would be one that follows Wittgenstein (and Clifford Geertz), seeking simply to describe how the church uses its theological language. It must do this because the church itself is language forming.³² The concepts “meaning” and “understanding” are not defined in advance by reference to transcendently established truth conditions but arise out of their agreed use in the community.³³ They are better seen as dependent on their context.³⁴ Thus the meaning of biblical narratives, or of theological discourse, cannot be accurately considered in a context-neutral or language-independent way. To do this would be to ask about their truth-conditions in isolation from the community. And such an inquiry cannot, in Frei's view, yield the meaning of such narratives or discourse. Meaning, understanding, and other philosophical constructs or concepts can be used, but they must be subordinated to Christian self-description. That is, what it means to understand a story or a text can only be determined by the use of such an understanding in the Christian form of life. The biblical narratives are to be understood in their literal sense, simply because this is the way the Christian community has used them in its form of life. And this form of life, so far as I can see, is ultimately brute.³⁵

As Frei argued in *The Eclipse*, three versions of the “literal sense” can be distinguished, the third of which bears the strongest affinity to Frei's way of doing theology. On this third understanding, “the *sensus literalis* is the way the text has generally been used in the community. It is the sense of the

³⁰ Ibid., 101.

³¹ Note that Ricoeur and Tracy distinguish clearly between a sentence's being meaningful and its being true. Frei is not accusing them of confusing these two notions. But he does read them as holding (or assuming) that the conditions a sentence must meet for it to be true constitutes its meaning.

³² Ibid., 100.

³³ As far as I am aware, Frei does not discuss much any view of the significance of differences among different Christian communities, though he is obviously aware that there are such differences.

³⁴ Ibid., 101. Though Frei did not have a chance to flesh out the notion of community use, he is clearly aware that members of church communities will often disagree about what constitutes proper use, as well as the best meaning of many (if not all) of the narratives, and will have complicated histories of such disagreements.

³⁵ By saying that this form of life is ultimately brute, I do not mean that it needs no justification nor that it is immune from criticism, only that such criticism or justification must arise from within the tradition or form of life itself and the texts whose meanings are constituted by their uses in the form of life.

text in its sociolinguistic context—liturgical, pedagogical, polemical, and so on.”³⁶ Like Lindbeck, Frei here cites Wittgenstein as inspiration for his articulation of this third understanding of the literal sense.³⁷ In the context of a religious community, the way a text is used in a community just is the teaching of the text that the community considers to be authoritative.³⁸ In the modern period, Frei argues, the literal sense of the biblical texts came to be their referentially understood meaning—that is, the events to which they purported to refer. Yet it is not the referential understanding of their meaning that constituted this sense as their literal sense but the judgment of the community that their extralinguistic reference was their authoritative teaching. Thus, what makes a particular sense of a biblical text the “literal” sense is nothing other than the community’s judgment (or the presupposition of certain of its actions) that this particular sense is authoritative. And a particular sense will be authoritative insofar as it enables the church to live out its mission.³⁹

For my purposes, the most important features of Frei’s move to this third understanding are twofold. First, this third understanding of the literal sense gives to the community the role of the ultimate arbiter of the meaning of any and all biblical texts. Second, that meaning is now indexed to the use of the text in the living out of the community’s mission. It is here that we can see most clearly the influence of the later Wittgenstein as well as Frei’s theological kinship with Lindbeck.

In his later essays, he argues that the viability of the literal reading of Scripture will follow (or not) “from the actual, fruitful use religious people continue to make of it.”⁴⁰ In hermeneutics, though, the literal reading is dependent on a general hermeneutic theory. Frei’s objection to hermeneutics and its consequences is that the reference of the biblical narratives (a mode of being-in-the-world) is established transcendentally—thus, independently of the community’s actual use of the texts.⁴¹ Notice the par-

³⁶ Frei, “Theology and the Interpretation of Narrative,” 104.

³⁷ “This is the setting in which it is appropriate to reach for that saying of Wittgenstein that has so often and wrongly been given the status of a general principle: ‘Don’t ask for the meaning; ask for the use’” (ibid.). Frei also acknowledges being deeply indebted to Charles M. Wood, *The Formation of Christian Understanding* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981). Frei, “Theology and the Interpretation of Narrative,” 115 n. 13.

³⁸ Frei, “Theology and the Interpretation of Narrative,” 105.

³⁹ Ibid., 105–6. Frei cites Augustine, for example, who “understood the plain sense of Scripture to be that which conduces to faith, hope, and the twofold love of God and neighbor” (105; citing Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* I, 36, 40; II, 6, 8, 9, 14).

⁴⁰ Frei, “The ‘Literal Reading’ of Biblical Narrative,” 117–52, quote at 119. The literal reading here is a way of expressing the meaning of biblical narratives. So he describes several different ways Scripture has been read in the Christian community. There have been typological readings, figural readings, allegorical readings, but all these readings depend on, or are understandable because of, the literal reading of the texts (122).

⁴¹ Ibid., 125–29. By “transcendental” here, I mean a logical argument that begins with identification of the conditions of the possibility of any human experience or act of understanding.

allel to Wittgenstein. On Frei's reading, Ricoeur and Tracy argue that the world of the text that is opened up can have meaning only if it is a "*possibly true world*."⁴² Frei reads Ricoeur and Tracy here as deriving the meaning of the text by reference to the truth conditions of the text. In Frei's view, Ricoeur and Tracy take such truth conditions to be accessible to a reader, considering a text in isolation from its use in a community. Its meaning is thus independent of its use in the community, on Frei's reading, a critique at least bears a strong family resemblance to the later Wittgenstein's claim that meaning cannot be established by reference to truth conditions.⁴³

This parallel is reinforced by the similarity of their remedies. For Frei, the central problem of both phenomenological hermeneutics and arguments regarding the historical factuality (or lack of it) of the biblical narratives is that "'meaning' is identical with 'possible truth.'"⁴⁴ Frei thinks a better alternative is "a theory confined to describing how and in what specific context a certain kind of reading functions."⁴⁵ The virtue of this theory is that it does not concern itself with possible truth (i.e., with truth conditions) but with the role the interpretation of texts plays in the life of the community (i.e., the Christian form of life). It is this role that gives the texts their meaning. Similarly, Wittgenstein's remedy for philosophical analysis is to forswear explanation and to limit its therapeutic task to description.

It is helpful here to recall Kripke's influential identification of Wittgenstein's three central notions. First, the *agreement* of the community is absolutely essential to ascribing a meaning to the biblical texts and, indeed, to our theological language. Though Springs argues that Frei never "collapsed" meaning into use, Frei himself, quoting Lindbeck, is persuaded that "meaning is constituted by the uses of a specific language rather than being distinguished from it."⁴⁶ That is, meaning is not derivable from transcendently established truth conditions but only from the use—the agreed use—of the community.⁴⁷ Second, the notion of *forms of life* also plays a critical role in Frei's method. Christians have a distinctive form of life, and the meanings of their religious language, of theological language, and of the biblical texts all derive from the role such language plays in their form of life. Third, there must be some *criterion* (or criteria) by which members of the community can judge whether a person is correctly following the rules for use of language about God and of religious language more broadly. That criterion is the literal sense of the biblical texts.⁴⁸ But it is the community that has established the *sensus literalis* as its criterion by which

⁴² Ibid., 132.

⁴³ See my *Liberalism versus Postliberalism*, 208–11.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 139.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Springs, 18; cf. 21, 147 (quoting Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 114).

⁴⁷ See n. 41 above for my use of "transcendental" here.

⁴⁸ For Lindbeck, doctrines play this criteriological role.

to determine whether the rules for playing its language game have been followed.

III

My view, then, is that Frei's way of doing theology is suffused with and heavily indebted to the later Wittgenstein. This is by no means a novel assertion. Frei himself acknowledges Wittgenstein's influence on his thought, and this influence has been recognized by his interpreters, critics and sympathizers alike.⁴⁹ And one of the primary theses of Springs's book is that Wittgenstein was not someone Frei turned to later in his later essays but was instead someone that influenced Frei from his earliest work.⁵⁰ Why, then, does Springs insist that, despite Wittgenstein's influence, Frei was no card-carrying Wittgensteinian?⁵¹

There are several reasons, it seems to me. First, because Frei's first allegiance is to the narratives themselves, and then to Barth, Springs takes this to preclude Frei from being a card-carrying Wittgensteinian. In other words, because Frei's first allegiance is to Barth, and he uses Wittgenstein only because it helps him to be more Barthian, this means he is really a Barthian and not really a Wittgensteinian. To some extent, this is a stipulative matter, and Springs can obviously use the term "Wittgensteinian" whatever way he wants. Frei, he says, "is drawn to Wittgenstein's thinking and finds it helpful because, first, he is persuaded by Barth's theology. To misorder this relation—to view Frei as first or primarily a Wittgensteinian—is certain to veer off the rails."⁵² Springs does not want to tie "the success of [Frei's] theological project to the success of Wittgenstein's philosophical project. This was a problem that Frei was vigilant against—a lesson he learned from Barth. Hence, while Wittgenstein's praxis-oriented, unsystematic approach and antipathy to grand theorizing all conspire to form a sensibility that keenly appealed to Frei (for Barthian reasons), it always entailed the risk of becoming an "antitheory theory" and thus implicating Frei in the very situation that he continually warned against—"getting the cart before the horse."⁵³

⁴⁹ See Hans W. Frei, "Remarks in Connection with a Theological Proposal," in *Theology and Narrative*, 34; William C. Placher, "Introduction," in *Theology and Narrative*; George Hunsinger, "Postliberal Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Kevin Vanhoozer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 50; Mike Higton, *Christ, Providence and History: Hans Frei's Public Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 158–59, 189–90; Paul J. DeHart, *The Trial of the Witnesses: The Rise and Decline of Postliberal Theology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006).

⁵⁰ Springs, 44.

⁵¹ In attempting to answer this question, I will make some critical remarks, so it is worth reiterating that I take these to be substantially outweighed by my admiration for Springs's overall excellent treatment of Frei.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 53.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Frei may have seen the dangers of following Wittgenstein too closely and may have made efforts not to do so. Most notably, Frei made valiant efforts to distinguish himself from D. Z. Phillips's version of Wittgenstein.⁵⁴ From my perspective, however, this does not imply that he was successful in distancing himself from Wittgenstein, at least regarding the meaning of the narratives. I agree that Frei's first loyalty was to Barth and that he would have parted ways with Wittgenstein had it been necessary in order to maintain his fidelity to Barth. But again, that does not imply that he in fact did part ways with Wittgenstein. And there seems to be a bit of a paradox here in the argument that you are not really a Wittgensteinian unless you use or follow Wittgenstein in a systematic way—by developing an “antitheory theory.” But given Wittgenstein's own antitheoretical and antisystematic stance, if you did that, you really would not be following Wittgenstein after all.

Second, on my reading, Springs believes that to be a Wittgensteinian it is not enough to hold that the meaning of a sentence or a text is constituted by its use in a form of life. Instead, one has to “reduce” or “collapse” meaning into community use, and doing so would make such usage purely arbitrary—that is, it would imply that the narratives mean what they do simply because the community arbitrarily decided that they would have a certain meaning.⁵⁵ We could then make texts mean whatever we want, unconstrained by anything, like Alice in Wonderland. Now I confess I do not share that fear, and I do not think Wittgenstein's views on meaning imply any kind of simplistic relativism. In my view, Springs mostly does not read Wittgenstein this way either, and I think in making this argument, it is better to read Springs as defending Frei against charges of relativism than as defending him against charges of being a Wittgensteinian.⁵⁶ Most of these critics have confused issues and concepts used in discussions of meaning with those most pertinent to epistemology, and this confusion leads Springs to argue that Frei does not “reduce” meaning to community use. He asks, for example, “can Frei's emphasis upon interpretive context avoid *reducing* itself in a textual ‘warranted assertability’ that treats meaning as ‘what your peers will let you get away with’ or ‘what fellow readers will agree to’?”⁵⁷ This is confused in my judgment. “Warranted assertability” is an epistemological concept, and when Richard Rorty used the infamous

⁵⁴ See Hans W. Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, ed. George Hunsinger and William C. Placher (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 46–55.

⁵⁵ See, e.g., Springs, 141–42, 153–54, 156–57.

⁵⁶ Springs intends to use Sellars and Brandom “to identify and sort out several delicately interwoven strands of normative constraint that easily become tangled in Frei's latest writings. These tangles obscure the nuances of his claims and open the door to charges that Frei, for instance, merely offers cultural-linguistic correction of his earlier claims about realistic narrative, and that what inevitably ensues is a textual ‘warranted assertability’ that collapses meaning into the community of readers’ uses of the text” (21).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

phrase “what your peers will let you get away with,” he was giving his understanding of truth, not semantic meaning.⁵⁸ It is not at all clear that it has any relevance, other than as a kind of metaphor, to meaning. What could make sense of Springs’s use of this phrase is that he is (also) defending Frei against those hermeneutic critics who charge that postliberals are committed to “a reading of Wittgenstein’s ‘forms of life’ as autonomous and discrete.”⁵⁹ On my reading, it is much more defensible to argue that Frei is not committed to such an “autonomous” reading of Wittgenstein than to argue that he is not a card-carrying Wittgensteinian.

This fear of arbitrariness or relativism comes through also in Springs’s discussion of Frei’s views on the rise of the literal sense to prominence. Springs himself thinks it “mistaken to emphasize traditional consensus in isolation from, or even as primary in relation to, Frei’s emphasis upon the christological features of the text.”⁶⁰ Now why does he think this, given the many passages from Frei’s later work that indicate the primacy of the traditional consensus? He quotes a long passage from “The ‘Literal Reading’” essay in which Frei says, “interpretive traditions of religious communities tend to reach a consensus. . . . The literal reading . . . was the crucial instance of this consensus in the early church. . . . The ‘literal’ reading in this fashion became the normative of ‘plain’ reading. . . . There is no a priori reason why the ‘plain’ reading could not have been ‘spiritual’ in contrast to ‘literal.’ . . . The identification of the plain with the literal sense was not a logically necessary development, but it did begin with the early Christian community.”⁶¹

Most commentators have read this passage as George Hunsinger did—that the literal sense was authorized, at least primarily, by the traditional consensus, rather than any structural feature of the text, and indeed this seems the most obvious interpretation. Why does Springs think it mistaken? He does so because of the next sentence in the essay, in which Frei states, “The creed, ‘rule of faith’ or ‘rule of truth’ which governed the Gospels’ use in the church asserted the primacy of their literal sense.”⁶² What is the significance of the rule of faith as a rule for reading? It means that Frei “recognized that this development was neither arbitrary nor accidental. Identification of the literal reading as plain or obvious emerged, as he says, ‘right from the beginning’ from the type of ‘ruled use’ that was central to the identity of this community.”⁶³ Thus, since the communal consensus

⁵⁸ The quote is from Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 176.

⁵⁹ Springs, 5. Springs cites Dan Stiver as leveling such a charge in Dan Stiver, *Theology after Ricoeur* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2001), 46–51, esp. 51, and in “Theological Method,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, 181.

⁶⁰ Springs, 150.

⁶¹ Frei, “The Literal Reading of Biblical Narrative,” 122–23.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 123.

⁶³ Springs, 151.

was neither arbitrary nor accidental, Springs believes it cannot be the primary warrant. Instead, for Springs the crucial point is that "the formation of the scriptural canon was not, as Childs argues, 'a haphazard growth.' Frei's claim that this development was not 'logically necessary' does not implicate him in the claim that the primacy of the literal sense resulted by sheer luck or the community's arbitrary preference to 'opt for' one sense over another. In fact, this complex, historically contingent process was predicated upon object-oriented theological witness, discernment, and dispute."⁶⁴

The community's consensus was not arbitrary, therefore, but had reasons behind it. The literal sense of the texts about Jesus ascribed certain predicates to Jesus that allowed the community to recognize them "as portraying the truth about Jesus in accord with the apostolic witness. The primacy of the literal sense, Frei wrote elsewhere, recognizes that these stories are adequate to portray this truth. It recognizes 'the fitness and congruence of the "letter" to be the channel of the spirit.' So, there is far more at stake here than what the Christian community perceived to be beneficial, useful, or how the community decided to use the biblical text."⁶⁵ But what more is at stake? Springs does not say. Irrespective of what was at stake, though, it was the community's use that nonetheless determined that the literal sense would be primary. We can agree that the community decided on the literal sense on the basis of the content of the narratives and the accordance with the apostolic witness (or what they knew of it). That is, the community came to use the literal sense as the plain sense because of the content of the gospel narratives and their perception of its accord with what they knew of the apostles' testimony. But all that establishes is that there was some reason, even good reason, for the communal consensus that arose. It in no way undercuts the notion that it was the community that made the literal sense primary and that this use endowed these texts with their meaning.

To say that language use is constrained by features of the world or other community practices, or even other kinds of language use (i.e., the use of a sentence or phrase in one context may be constrained to some extent by its use in other contexts) is not inconsistent with the notion that meaning is constituted by community use. Springs's defense of Frei, it seems to me, involves two moves: (1) he takes the notion that meaning is constituted by use to be equivalent to its being "reduced" to consensus, and then (2) he takes the "reduction of meaning to use" to imply that there can be no criticism of any decision on meaning that a community might arbitrarily choose to adopt.⁶⁶ The first move seems simply rhetorical. But I take at least

⁶⁴ Ibid., 153 (citing Brevard S. Childs, "Speech-Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58, no. 4 [2005]: 381, 383).

⁶⁵ Springs, 155 (quoting Frei, "Theology and the Interpretation of Narrative," 108).

⁶⁶ See, e.g., Springs, 147.

the second move to be unwarranted, and I do not find much of an argument for it. On my reading, he makes this second move to defend Frei against critics charging him with an “autonomous” reading of Wittgenstein.

Springs’s concerns are well illustrated in his discussion of a long quote from Frei’s latest (unfinished) work, *Types of Christian Theology*, in which Frei states that Scripture “does not contain a ‘meaning’ apart from interpretation or use in the Church.” Frei recognizes that interpretations or uses will differ; when such differences arise, we should “pay attention to the features of the text [and not] act as though it had none or as though they varied simply as our reading of them varied.”⁶⁷ Springs interprets this passage as follows: “On one hand, here Frei asserts that the very concept of ‘Scripture’ has meaning insofar as it finds use within the social practices of the church. And yet, he is clear in this passage that Scripture’s ‘meaning’—the content of Scripture—does not reduce to use.”⁶⁸ On my reading, however, in this passage Frei is not at all clear about this. What he is saying is that such uses cannot be arbitrary and still conform to the “plain sense.” Of course “normative constraints” are interwoven into scriptural practice, and the content of Scripture has a conceptual independence from particular readings.⁶⁹ Yet that “conceptual independence” is itself a product not only of real features of the world experienced by the authors of Scripture but also of the broader socially established meanings of the language used in Scripture, both originally and in translation. In other words, the language of Scripture is not self-contained but is part of a larger linguistic system—a natural language—that is established by the users of that language, who through their use establish rules for its use. Such rules are broader than the rules of reading specific to scriptural reading but still exert a kind of “objective” constraint on the rules of scriptural reading. Yet these constraints themselves are socially established. Readers of Scripture are indeed accountable to “the features of the text,” but these features are there because of broader norms that are themselves socially established.

In my view, this does not distance Frei from Wittgenstein, for it was not a part of Wittgenstein’s later program that the meaning of particular sentences or particular texts be autonomous and subject to arbitrary interpretation. And mostly Springs does not read Wittgenstein this way, either. And this leads me to believe that what is motivating Springs is to defend Frei against charges that he is committed to an “autonomous” reading of Wittgenstein (a reading that, like Springs, I take to be faulty).

Related to these concerns, Springs argues that because Frei took the narratives themselves to impose constraints upon community uses of its sacred texts, this means that the community could not simply impose any meaning they chose upon the texts but were limited among those they

⁶⁷ Frei, *Types*, 86–87.

⁶⁸ Springs, 162.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 146–48.

could have chosen. Just insofar as Frei takes the texts themselves to impose constraints on community use, this in Springs's view distances him from Wittgenstein. Once again, it seems as though Springs has in view relativist charges against Frei and a worry that Frei's understanding of truth can be assimilated to Rorty's. He quotes Kathryn Tanner: "'Communal habits of appealing to texts are what give rise to talk about a plain sense,' Tanner writes, 'even when such a consensus in practice is not itself what is talked about.' The result is that discourse about the meaning of the text becomes accountable to more than just what one's fellows will let one get away with—more, that is, than what they explicitly take the text to say."⁷⁰ But what does this mean? It can mean nothing more than that there is a broader background of language use as well as facts about the world that will constrain the interpretation of some particular text. But this broader background of language use is itself determined by a consensus of the community, as Wittgenstein himself notes. And it is this broader background use of language that determines the relationships between language and the world that constrains the interpretation of particular texts. But in addition to these rules, reality itself imposes certain constraints.

In other words, to say that the meaning of particular language or particular texts is constituted by their use in a form of life does not mean that there are no constraints on how the community may decide to use them. Why couldn't a league of baseball players simply decide to call an engine block a baseball and use it as a baseball in a baseball game? They couldn't do it because the physical properties of an engine block simply and obviously render it unusable as a baseball. But this by no means implies that some league or culture couldn't call a baseball an "engineball" or even an "engine block" and an engine block a baseball. What this implies is that we can acknowledge the constraints imposed by the world as well as by broader rules for language use (grammatical and otherwise) while at the same time recognizing that both the meaning of words and these broader background rules are ultimately conventional.⁷¹

Third, Springs is worried that interpreting Frei as a "card-carrying" Wittgensteinian on the meaning of the biblical narratives will open him to Ronald Thiemann's criticism that (on Springs's reading) Frei compromises the authority of such narratives as revelation. "Positing Wittgenstein's instruction to 'look for the use' as a methodological rule and then following

⁷⁰ Ibid., 146 (quoting Kathryn Tanner, "Theology and the Plain Sense," in *Scriptural Authority and Narrative Interpretation*, ed. Garrett Green [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2000], 59–78, quote at 66).

⁷¹ It should also imply an understanding of meaning as use can still accommodate (and indeed requires) a notion of reference. The use of the notion of reference does not imply a "referential" or descriptivist understanding of meaning. Many of Frei's troubles come from a confusion of reference and meaning, and to his credit Springs tries to sort these out using the work of Robert Brandom and Sabina Lovibond. How successful this effort is I will mention below.

it to its apparently logical conclusion, Thiemann argued, leaves textual meaning so indeterminate as to open the way for an irreducible diversity of meanings. More importantly, it renders the revelational authority of the scriptural text a product of the community's decision to take this text as authoritative."⁷²

On Springs's view, interpreting Frei as giving too large a role to communal consensus in determining the meaning of the biblical texts (as he thinks Kathryn Tanner, Charles Wood, and David Kelsey do) will subject Frei to "Thiemann's criticism that this general approach reduces the text's revelational authority to a function of the community, thereby eliminating God's prevenient act of self-revelation, invitation to discipleship, Christian community, and the tasks of theology."⁷³ Yet I am not persuaded that interpreting Frei as a Wittgensteinian will open him up to such a criticism. Nor will interpreting Wittgenstein's understanding of meaning as use in a form of life. To think that it does, it seems to me, presupposes certain commitments on the nature of "revelational authority" that Springs does not articulate.

Next, Springs believes that if the meaning of the texts, including their literal sense, is constituted by community use, this "reduces the text's revelational authority to a function of the community."⁷⁴ Even if we were to grant this move, just what is the problem with this? Surely a text's "revelational authority" for a particular community is not independent from the community's taking it to be revelatory of God. No matter how well and clearly a text may reveal what God is in part like and some of God's likes and dislikes, it will not exercise any authority over a community unless that community takes it to be authoritative. Of course, whether a text in fact exercises revelational authority is a separate question from whether it should have such authority, and this latter question is subject of course to constraints from both within and without the interpretive tradition. But I fail to see why taking a text's revelational authority to be a function of a community's use of that text is so objectionable.

Springs thinks it is objectionable, because he believes it "thereby eliminate[s] God's prevenient act of self-revelation, invitation to discipleship, Christian community and the tasks of theology."⁷⁵ But I see no reason why making a text's authority dependent on a community's taking it to be authoritative "thereby" eliminates these things. Suppose I, and my community of Jesus-deniers do not believe that anyone named Jesus of Nazareth ever lived in Palestine and that the gospel stories were fabricated after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE by a desperate group of Zealots.

⁷² Springs, 145 (citing Ronald Thiemann, *Revelation and Theology: The Gospel as Narrated Promise* [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985], 56–70).

⁷³ Springs, 148.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Therefore, we do not take the gospel narratives to have any revelational authority, and we adopt social practices that take no account whatever of them. In this case, the gospel narratives will exercise no authority over our moral, liturgical, linguistic, or other practices. But this has no bearing at all on the questions of whether God in fact acted preveniently in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; whether the gospels' narrative of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection is inspired by God and constitutes God's self-revelation; or whether such narratives constitute an invitation to discipleship. Those things may all be quite true, and yet such narratives will not exercise any authority over me and my community unless we take them to have such authority and at least try to take them into account in forming our practices. Indeed, later in the book, Springs acknowledges this in his discussion of Robert Brandom's notion of a rule: "What makes this rule authoritative is one's *taking it* to be authoritative and thus binding oneself by it."⁷⁶ He then quite rightly stresses that this authoritative force is separate and distinct from the content of the rule.

Conversely, perhaps Springs is operating with some other understanding of authority. Say, for example, the texts have whatever authority they have because they in fact constitute God's self-revelation and because their portrayals of divine likes and dislikes in fact are true. If I do not form my practices in acknowledgment of such authority, then there will be adverse consequences for me, my community, and my practices. If this is the case, it seems to me that the texts will have such authority irrespective of how the meanings of their sentences are constituted.

Finally, Springs wants to distance Frei from Wittgenstein because he wants to preserve Frei's ability to make (and defend) truth claims. Almost the entirety of chapter 5 is devoted to explaining just how it is that Frei thinks Christian theology makes truth claims. But why is this an issue at all? Springs is here responding to critics who seem to believe that to be a Wittgensteinian when it comes to meaning is also to be a "Wittgensteinian fideist" when it comes to using him in theology or philosophy of religion. But at least on my view (and Springs's, too, I think) this is not the right way to interpret Wittgenstein, and Frei does not need to abandon Wittgenstein on meaning in order to avoid fideism.⁷⁷ As I have argued elsewhere, Frei's writings do indeed open him up to difficulties regarding truth, but these difficulties are a result of his confused comments on reference rather than his understanding of meaning as constituted by community use.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Ibid., 158.

⁷⁷ One does not find this interpretation much among analytic philosophers of language (not many have followed Kai Nielsen), perhaps because many couldn't care less whether theology can make any truth claims or not.

⁷⁸ Frei himself, in my view, evidenced significant confusion regarding the relationship between truth and meaning, and this confusion fueled his discussions of the relationship between reference and meaning. Elsewhere I discuss this issue in the context of Frei's debate

To make his point, Springs turns to Sabina Lovibond's discussion of Wittgenstein's view of "objective discourse." He quotes the following passage:

Although (in Wittgenstein's view) it is an agreement, or congruence, in our ways of acting that makes objective discourse materially possible, this agreement does not itself "enter into" the relevant language-game: when we ask a question about some aspect of reality, we are not asking for a report on the state of public opinion with regard to that question, we are asking to be told the *truth* about it. . . . The idea of rationality as resting upon a consensus, then, does not imply that the *fact* of consensus need carry any weight with us in any particular piece of thinking about the objective world: a point which is demonstrated by the absence of any logical (or "grammatical") objection to statements of the form: "I'm right and everyone else is wrong."⁷⁹

On my reading, this passage reveals the confusion endemic in the interpretation of Wittgenstein as a "fideist" and those who criticize Frei on the basis of this interpretation—those critics to whom Springs appears to be responding. Wittgenstein's views on meaning need not have implications for epistemology or for realism/antirealism debates. Of course it is true, for example, that rabbits are more similar to other rabbits than they are to prairie dogs, and this is true irrespective of what anyone else in my linguistic community thinks. But it is a different issue whether the term "rabbit" is properly used only to talk about rabbits or instead can (also) be used to talk about some larger natural kind group that includes rabbits and prairie dogs. Only the latter issue relates directly to the meaning of "rabbit," notwithstanding the fact that this latter issue will be dependent to a very large extent on the actual similarity of rabbits to other rabbits, on the one hand, and to prairie dogs, on the other. On Wittgenstein's view, the issue regarding the proper use of the term "rabbit" is the one that relates directly to the meaning of "rabbit." And it is the issue that is determined by community agreement (which of course can be implicit in community use).

Springs glosses the excerpt from Lovibond as follows:

The point is that the normative constraints implicit in reading practices make it possible for an individual community member to dissent from communal consensus by appealing to the norms constitutive of the practice at hand, the object that orients the practice, and that toward which it is directed. Some such dissenter can claim, as Lovibond points out, "I'm right and everyone else is wrong" and demon-

with Carl Henry. Frei says that reference is relevant only to truth, and not to meaning. This is part of his attempt to get away from what he calls "meaning-as-reference," but his discussion is quite confused. Referring expressions are an important part of any adequate view of semantic meaning, in my judgment. You can view meaning as constituted by use in a form of life and still retain the notion of reference in the sense that there are rules for the use of referring expressions within adequately formed sentences. See my *Liberalism versus Postliberalism*, 258–64.

⁷⁹ Sabina Lovibond, *Realism and Imagination in Ethics*, 148. Springs quotes this passage at 147–48.

strate that this is actually the case. But to be recognizable as a reader in the first place is to be accountable to the normative constraints that constitute the practices of reading and consulting texts and, concomitantly, the constraints composing the object as a text.⁸⁰

Of course, this is quite right. But it is really directed to the truth of the claims being made rather than to the meaning of the language being used. For Wittgenstein, language use is a thoroughly social practice and can not be anything other than thoroughly social. The point of it is to communicate. If I decide that I am right and everyone else is wrong in terms of the proper way to use “rabbit” (or any other term or phrase), there will be times when my statements will be intended to mean one thing while my hearers will believe they mean something else. Yet this does not imply that I cannot argue with my peers that one or more of our social or linguistic practices should be changed based on objective features of our shared world. Further, it does not imply that I cannot argue with my peers that such practices should be changed based on our broader or more inclusive practices (or forms of life). I can do this without shying away from the notion that such normative constraints are ultimately conventional—that is, the notion that what makes them “normative” is communal consensus (whether implicit or explicit).

To try to make clear how the narrative features of the biblical texts (which I take to be a subset of the objective features of the world) properly constrain a community's construal of their meaning, Springs turns to Robert Brandom in an attempt at “a philosophical redescription of the apparently contradictory set of claims set forth above [that, first, the meaning of the Scriptures is constituted by community use, and, second, that there are objective constraints on the range of permissible community uses].”⁸¹ In my judgment, though, Brandom can show us that one can be a Wittgensteinian on semantic meaning without being committed to understanding truth as “warranted assertability,” or as “whatever your peers will let you get away with.” He can also help us see that a Wittgensteinian understanding of “meaning as use” does not imply “meaning as arbitrary use.” And in my judgment, though Springs's appropriation of Brandom's work constitutes a significant advance in postliberal theology, it does not persuade me, at any rate, that Frei was not thoroughly Wittgensteinian. For example, discussing Brandom, Springs notes that the authoritative force of a rule is distinct and independent from the content of that rule and, indeed, must be for the rule to be a rule. Then he says:

On Brandom's account, the meaning of assertions is contingent upon how one ought to use them in a given time and place in light of the socially instituted norms of concept use that constitute language use. As I read Frei above, analogously,

⁸⁰ Springs, 147 (citation omitted).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

participants in the practice of reading and consulting Christian Scripture hold one another accountable to the norms constitutive of that practice and not merely community consensus about what the text means. This insight generates a conception of objectivity—that the norms constitutive of practices exert constraints upon what can count as a legitimate, acceptable, or appropriate performance of that practice.⁸²

Now it is Springs's application of Brandom's insights to Frei that causes difficulties here, at least for me. When Springs says that "participants in the practice of reading and consulting Christian Scripture hold one another accountable to the norms constitutive of that practice and not merely community consensus about what the text means," he is setting up the "norms constitutive of that [reading] practice" as somehow objective, and in many cases at least that is correct but only relative to the reading of some particular text or set of texts. The norms, that is, exert some independent authority over the particular reading of particular texts. But these constitutive norms, as Brandom recognizes, are themselves socially instituted. That is, the norms that are constitutive of the reading practices are themselves established by community consensus. It is this that makes sense of the notion that particular readings are accountable to relatively objective rules such as the rule of faith for a community. But if Frei says things that imply that "the concept of 'scripture' has no meaning apart from its use in church contexts," he means that the norms that constrain (and perhaps constitute) reading a text as Scripture are a result of communal consensus.⁸³ And this is thoroughly Wittgensteinian. When Wittgenstein asserts that meaning is constituted by use in a community, he does not mean it is arbitrary use. It is ruled use, but again, the rules (or norms) are themselves established by communal consensus (whether implicit or explicit).⁸⁴

When it comes to Frei and the plain sense of Scripture, the plain sense is constrained by broader rules for reading texts (i.e., broader than reading Scripture). So textual practices are constrained by the plain sense, which in

⁸² Springs continues: "We have seen, however, that Frei encountered difficulty in clearly holding two sets of normative criteria for assessment together—traditional consensus with object-directed and practical constraints. This difficulty might account for the ambiguity in his description of the *sensus literalis* 'not only as use-in-context but as unity of grammatical/syntactical sense and signified subject' and elsewhere his acknowledgement of the constraining features of the scriptural text while asserting that the concept 'scripture' has no meaning apart from its use in church contexts" (158–59; citing Frei, "Theology and the Interpretation of Narrative," 110).

⁸³ Springs, 159. This is Springs's formulation, and he cites Frei, "Theology and the Interpretation of Narrative," 110. I agree that Frei not infrequently maintains a position like this, but I confess I cannot find it at the cited reference.

⁸⁴ This remains the case even on Brandom's reading of Wittgenstein's regress-of-rules argument, which, Brandom argues, shows the need for a "pragmatist conception of norms—a notion of primitive correctnesses [*sic*] of performance *implicit* in *practice* that precede and are presupposed by their *explicit* formulation in *rules* and *principles*" (*Making It Explicit*, 21). For those practices whose "implicit correctnesses" precede and are presupposed by explicit formulation in rules are socially established—i.e., they are established by consensus, though that consensus be implicit.

turn is constrained by (or perhaps even established by) broader rules for language use (and the practices which explicit rules presuppose). Yet all these rules or norms are socially established and established by linguistic use. Further, scriptural reading practices, and the rules that constrain them, are always set within the context of more general language use. So far as I can see, this moves beyond Frei, and helpfully so. From my point of view, it is helpful because it is a move *toward a theory*. And none of this, so far as I can see, is inconsistent with the notion of meaning as use. In my view, it is entirely consistent with reading Frei as thoroughly Wittgensteinian.⁸⁵

IV

Thus, Frei's critique of liberal theology, his analysis of theological claims, and his own method are thoroughly suffused with, and dependent on, the later Wittgenstein's views on linguistic meaning.⁸⁶ In my own judgment, Frei did not make a mistake in doing this. What caused Frei difficulties was not his Wittgensteinian understanding of meaning as use but his (also Wittgensteinian, as well as Barthian) antitheoretical orientation. It was this orientation that prevented Frei from responding adequately to questions about how to assert the truth of the narratives—not only from conservative evangelicals like Carl Henry but also from sympathizers like George Hunsinger. Frei himself recognized that reference is crucial to questions of truth. But that can only be the case if it plays a role in assigning a truth value to the sentence in which the referring expression appears (or the proposition the sentence expresses). And this in turn requires that reference make a contribution to the meaning of the sentence. But reference can make such a contribution to meaning without the meaning of a sentence being constituted by its truth conditions. As William Alston has shown, it is indeed possible to develop technically detailed theories of sentence meaning based on use—theories that utilize the notion of reference as an important contributor to meaning.⁸⁷

On my own view, defenders of Frei should feel free to acknowledge frankly his dependence on Wittgenstein, as Springs has done. Further, they need not deny that the later Wittgenstein did indeed understand meaning as use, even if he resisted offering any theory of meaning. But it would

⁸⁵ So far as I can see, Brandom does not take his own pragmatist conception of norms to be inconsistent with Wittgenstein (see *ibid.*, 18–23, 45–46). This is so despite the fact that Wittgenstein uses “rule” much more broadly than Brandom thinks wise (64–66).

⁸⁶ I think this is the case on most readings of Wittgenstein, but it comes through with particular clarity in Kripke's reading. While Kripke's reading of Wittgenstein is controversial, it is his skeptical solution to the rule-following paradox that has provoked the most controversy and not his identification of the more basic elements of the later Wittgenstein's thoughts on linguistic meaning.

⁸⁷ See William P. Alston, *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

advance Frei's postliberal program to abandon his and Wittgenstein's antitheoretical orientation. This is precisely what I take Springs to have done, and I want to stress that I applaud Springs's move at this point. In my judgment Springs's appropriation of Brandom's theorizing about norms, rules, and practices is the most original and important part of the book. But it is precisely at this point that Springs moves beyond anything that Frei ever attempted. I have seen no evidence that Frei ever used or even read Brandom or Lovibond, upon whom Springs relies.⁸⁸ But far from being a defect in Springs's book, this is one of its most important merits. As I have argued elsewhere, postliberal theology needs to move beyond both Frei and Wittgenstein on the meaning of the biblical texts. Springs uses Brandom to argue (quite rightly) that what really is the case with respect to the subject of our discursive practices or readings does and should have an impact on what we take to be the meaning of the texts we are reading. Further, this is so without compromising the "social-practical" character of either our particular readings or our reading practices. But to incorporate Brandom's theorizing into a postliberal account of the plain sense of scripture is to move beyond Frei. I agree with Springs that such insights "help Frei forward a coherent account of the plain sense that is at once contextually specific and yet reflects the textually articulated centrality of Christ."⁸⁹ It is at this point that Springs makes his most important contribution—using Brandom's own theorizing about meaning to help Frei move forward on Frei's own project. More than simply an interpretation of Frei, Springs's fine book makes an important constructive advance that can allow postliberal theology to distinguish clearly the meaning of a sentence from its truth and to articulate a coherent relation between these two notions. Such an advance can avoid the kind of confusion over the relationship of reference to truth, on the one hand, and to meaning, on the other—a confusion apparent in Frei's own struggles with truth in his debate with Carl Henry. It could also allow a coherent and robust assertion of the truth of religious and theological claims, and maybe even a methodological rapprochement with liberalism.

⁸⁸ Indeed, both Springs and Mike Higton note that in asking for the "use" rather than the "meaning," he specifically refers to "ordinary language" (Springs, 112; Higton, *Christ, Providence and History*, 158–59, 189–90).

⁸⁹ Springs, 161.

After the Quotidian Turn: Interpretive Categories and Scholarly Trajectories in the Study of Religion since the 1960s*

Thomas A. Tweed / *University of Notre Dame*

All scholars in the human sciences use interpretive categories. Those theoretical tools may be employed to make empirical claims that can be confirmed or disputed, but the categories themselves are not true or false. They are more or less adequate for the researcher's purposes. In other words, we assess those categories by appealing to pragmatic criteria.¹ Focusing on the conceptual implications and interpretive effects of scholars' linguistic usage, in this essay I discuss a cluster of related categories, especially *everyday life*, and assess their utility for the study of religion. It is important to note at the start that all categories—the terms and phrases used to guide research—afford a particular angle of vision. In turn, they all have blind spots. In some ways, the history of the study of religion—and all fields and subfields—has been a process of ceaseless change as one perspective replaces another, as scholars claim that the prevailing category—

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¹ I have addressed this issue in other works. I have proposed criteria for the use and evaluation of Weberian *ideal types* and have assessed the guiding categories in the study of US religion and Buddhism: Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844–1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 49–50, *Our Lady of the Exile: Diasporic Religion at a Cuban Catholic Shrine in Miami* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 135–38, and *Retelling U.S. Religious History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1–23. I laid out my pragmatic approach most fully—and discussed the assessment of categories, definitions, and theories—in *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 16–20, 30–31, 165–67, 246–47.

the orienting metaphor, key noun, or favored phrase—obscures something we should notice. That realization prompts a search for another interpretive term that promises to illumine what has been obscured.

As early as the first decade of the twentieth century and increasingly after the 1960s, scholars in the humanities, arts, and social sciences turned to the phrase *everyday life*—and related categories like *everyday religion* and *lived religion*—to illumine what had been obscured. Religion's interpreters in multiple disciplines used the adjectives *everyday* or *lived* to redirect attention to the embodied practices and material culture of ordinary people beyond the threshold of worship spaces. That redirection, which I call the *Quotidian Turn*, provided a much-needed corrective; however, I suggest, it was not without its interpretive limitations and definitional problems.

THE QUOTIDIAN TURN: TOWARD A HISTORY OF CONVERGING
INTERPRETIVE TRAJECTORIES

Those who chart the history of the humanities, arts, and social sciences delight in naming the twists and turns in theory and method. For example, we are told that there was a “linguistic turn,” a “poststructuralist turn,” and a “spatial turn” during the second half of the twentieth century. From one point of view, this is silly. The appeal to a single phrase to describe the complex and distinct approaches of many scholars in different disciplines and diverse nations is doomed to fail. Such attempts overstate the novelty and scope of the interpretive shift, and no label is elastic enough to contain all the subtle but significant variations. If we acknowledge the limitations of this scholarly practice, however, the impulse to label academic trends sometimes can be useful. At its best, it can illumine patterns that we otherwise might have overlooked or underemphasized.

With some trepidation, then, I want to propose just such a flawed label: I suggest that it might be helpful to talk about a *Quotidian Turn* in the study of religion—and, more broadly, in the study of history, society, and culture. I cannot offer a full account of these parallel—and sometimes intersecting—interpretive trajectories, but it might help to note that this altered focus appeared (or, in some places, accelerated) during and after the 1960s, especially but not only among speakers of English, French, and German in Europe, South Asia, and North America. Its starting point and defining commitments varied by disciplinary affiliation, research topic, and cultural setting. For example, the German *Alltagsgeschichte* of the 1970s and the South Asian Subaltern Studies Group of the 1980s were very different, even if they shared a concern to attend to ordinary people and everyday life.² The categories

² Peter Lambert and Phillipp Schofield, *Making History: An Introduction to the History and Practices of a Discipline* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 87, 170; David Ludden, “A Brief History of Subalternity,” in *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalization of South Asia*, ed. David Ludden (Oxford: Permanent Black, 2001), 1–39.

that these diverse scholars employed also diverged depending on whether they most wanted to illumine ignored places, practices, or people.

Since I will say more later about *everyday life*, consider just a few examples about the impulse to highlight *ordinary people*. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the work of the British Marxist historians is noteworthy, and none of them had more influence than E. P. Thompson and his 1963 volume *The Making of the English Working Class*.³ The *Annales* school in the Francophone world and, later, the “new social history” in the Anglophone world aimed to discern the long-term historical patterns and the local variations in the daily life of non-elites, and greater attention to class, race, and gender multiplied the characters in scholars’ narratives about the present and the past.⁴ The result was a shift in focus: for example, in the United States the number of doctoral dissertations in social history quadrupled between 1958 and 1978.⁵ Starting in the 1970s and increasingly after the 1980s, historians also paid more attention to indigenous peoples, who had suffered a second (representational) colonization as the previous scholarship had imagined the landscape as an unpopulated wilderness before colonizers planted their flags. Folklorists in Scandinavia and the North Atlantic world studied “vernacular creativity” embedded in local settings, and geographers in Germany and the United States turned their attention to the interpretation of “ordinary landscapes.”⁶ Reception theory altered the scholarly viewpoint, and literary critics, theater scholars, and art historians asked how ordinary people cocreated the plural meanings of artistic productions or how they created their own “outsider” or “folk” art—even if some complained about the emerging “anti-elitist bias.”⁷ In British cultural studies, media studies, and other fields, the analysis of “popular culture” emerged as an

³ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: V. Gollancz, 1963).

⁴ See Lambert and Schofield, *Making History*; and Guy Bourd  and Herv  Martin, *Les  coles historiques* (Paris:  ditions du Seuil, 1983).

⁵ Robert Darnton, “Intellectual and Cultural History,” in *The Past before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*, ed. Michael Kammen (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 327–54; Stephen Hunt, *Religion and Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁶ Leonard Norman Primiano, “Vernacular Religion and the Search for Method in Religious Folklore,” *Western Folklore* 54, no. 1 (January 1995): 37–56; Marion Bowman, “Vernacular Religion and Nature: The ‘Bible of the Folk’ Tradition in Newfoundland,” *Folklore* 114, no. 3 (December 2003): 285–95; Marion Bowman and  lo Valk, eds., *Vernacular Religion in Everyday Life: Expressions of Belief* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2012). Examples from geography are R. J. Johnston et al., eds., *Dictionary of Human Geography*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000); D. W. Meinig, ed., *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America, 1580–1845* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1928); Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969).

⁷ See David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Philip Smith and Alexander Riley, *Cultural Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009), 158–75; Ernst Gombrich, “David Freedberg: The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response,” *New York Review of Books* 15 (1990): 6–9.

alternative to the prevailing focus on the cultural production and aesthetic taste of elites.⁸

As with Thompson's influential book, some of that scholarly work on both sides of the Atlantic focused on class as a category of analysis and drew inspiration from Karl Marx and/or Antonio Gramsci, as did scholarship in and about Latin America and South Asia.⁹ Starting with the first volume of the Subaltern Studies Group's multivolume series in 1982, scholars writing from and about South Asia, especially India, adopted a term that had a long history but had been reintroduced by Gramsci: they announced their concern to "rectify the elitist bias" and reconsider "the subaltern," those of subordinate rank, "whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office, or in any other way."¹⁰ The term *subaltern* circulated in different parts of the world among proponents of postcolonial studies from different disciplines. The Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro had used Gramsci's notion of "subalternity" earlier, in his analysis of indigenous peoples.¹¹ Some scholars writing from and about that region have acknowledged their debts, including those who founded the Latin America Subaltern Studies Group in 1993.¹²

Other Latin Americanists have been more ambivalent. The literary scholar and postcolonial theorist Walter D. Mignolo, for example, expressed appreciation for subaltern studies but preferred slightly different categories—Michel Foucault's "subjugated knowledges" and Ribeiro's "subaltern knowledges"—because Guha and other South Asia specialists marked "the eighteenth century and the Enlightenment as the chronological frontier of modernity," while the sixteenth century and "the colonial legacies of the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the Americas" are the appropriate starting point for specialists of Latin America.¹³ Other scholars of Latin America, including historian William B. Taylor, found Ruha's approach to subaltern studies "good to think with . . . since the 1980s" but argued that its sharp distinctions (between "the people"/"the elites" as well as "resistance"/"accommodation") did not provide "a model for understanding the complexities of Spanish American colonialism, at least in Mexico."¹⁴

⁸ Smith and Riley, *Cultural Theory*, 144–57.

⁹ See Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

¹⁰ Ranajit Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), viii; Partha Chatterjee, "After Subaltern Studies," *Economic and Political Weekly* 47, no. 35 (September 2012): 44–49.

¹¹ Darcy Ribeiro, *Las Américas y la civilización: Proceso de formación y causas del desarrollo desigual de los pueblos Americanos* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1968), 13.

¹² See the Latin America Subaltern Studies Group's "Founding Statement," *Boundary 2*, no. 3 (1993): 110–21.

¹³ Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 18–21.

¹⁴ William Taylor, *Shrines and Miraculous Images: Religious Life in Mexico before the Reforma* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 89.

Taylor, who attended to religion, also criticized Subaltern Studies scholars for leaving “aside the religious faith—beliefs and practices—of peasant actors either as false consciousness or beside the point of their politics.”¹⁵ Like Taylor, a number of scholars who embraced the Quotidian Turn strove to take religion seriously, although their terminology varied depending on whether they wanted to emphasize the spaces, participants, or actions that had been obscured in the scholarship. For example, since the 1970s many historians and social scientists in Europe and in the Americas have studied “local religion” or “popular religion.”¹⁶ And Gabriel Le Bras influenced a generation of postwar French sociologists to study what he called “lived religion” (*la religion vécue*), which meant mostly the piety of the laity.¹⁷

Some interpreters in Europe, Latin America, and North America have directly or indirectly aligned themselves with the French sociology of “lived religion.” Most of them continued Le Bras’s original emphasis on non-elites, although they understood the adjective *lived* as an answer to the question of how religion is practiced more than as a response to the question of who is practicing it. Among the category’s advocates were the contributors to historian David Hall’s 1997 volume *Lived Religion in America*, including the French sociologist Danièle Hervieu-Léger and American religious studies scholar Robert Orsi. Since 1997, other interpreters have used the category.¹⁸ Among specialists in North American religion, Timothy Matovina employed it in a study of Latino Catholics in Texas, and Jennifer Hughes did the same in her study of Mexican Catholicism.¹⁹ Historian Diane Winston and her collaborators studied “television and lived religion,” and US sociologist Meredith McGuire analyzed *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*.²⁰ As with McGuire, some European social scientists also referred to the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ On local religion, see William A. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981); and Daniel L. Overmyer, *Local Religion in North China in the Twentieth Century: The Structure and Organization of Community* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). Ellen Badone, *Religious Orthodoxy and Popular Faith in European Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); and Daniel H. Levine, *Popular Voices in Latin American Catholicism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992) have emphasized “popular” religion.

¹⁷ Gabriel Le Bras, *Études de sociologie religieuse* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955). On Le Bras’s influence, see Danièle Hervieu-Léger, “‘What Scripture Tells Me’: Spontaneity and Regulation within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal,” in *Lived Religion in America*, ed. David Hall (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 22–23; and Grace Davie, *The Sociology of Religion* (London: Sage, 2007), 35.

¹⁸ For example, Manuel Vásquez, *More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 252–55.

¹⁹ Timothy Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio, from Colonial Origins to the Present* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Jennifer Scheper Hughes, *Biography of a Mexican Crucifix: Lived Religion and Local Faith from the Conquest to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁰ Diane Winston, ed., *Small Screen, Big Picture: Television and Lived Religion* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009); Meredith McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Another coedited volume used a related term, *practice*, but approvingly cited David Hall’s *Lived Religion in America* in the introduction. It also

ways that lived religion is practiced in *daily life* or *everyday life*, as with Sanne Derks's ethnography of a Bolivian pilgrimage site and as with other volumes on contemporary practices.²¹

Whichever adjective scholars chose—local, popular, or lived—many also appealed to phrases like *ordinary people* and *everyday life* in their analyses of religion. And, as I will show, some scholars have talked about *everyday religion*. Keeping these related but distinct scholarly trajectories in mind—especially the intersections with the study of lived religion—I now want to consider one of the central phrases in the analytic vocabulary of what I am calling the Quotidian Turn: *everyday life*.

EVERYDAY LIFE: TOWARD A HISTORY OF USAGE

Before assessing the phrase's accomplishments and limitations, it might help to give a few instances—though not a full historical account—of how scholars have employed it in cultural analysis. A preliminary survey of usage in publications suggests that the English adjective *everyday*—and the rough equivalents in German (*alltäglich*) and French (*quotidienne*)—appeared more frequently in books during the twentieth century, with variations across those languages but with a steady upward trend since 1920 and a precipitous spike after 1980.²² Various kinds of texts—including fiction—included

was coedited by Leigh Schmidt, one of the contributors to Hall's 1997 book, and it appeared in the Lived Religions Series edited by Hall and Robert Orsi: Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, Leigh E. Schmidt, and Mark Valeri, eds., *Practicing Protestants: Histories of Christian Life in America, 1630–1965* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

²¹ Sanne Derks, *Power and Pilgrimage: Dealing with Class, Gender, and Ethnic Inequality at a Bolivian Marian Shrine* (Berlin: Lit, 2009), 27, 171; Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans, eds., *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World* (London: Ashgate, 2009); Heinz Streib, Astrid Dinter, and Kerstin Söderblom, eds., *Lived Religion: Conceptual, Empirical and Practical-Theological Approaches: Essays in Honor of Hans-Günter Heimbrock* (Leiden: Brill, 2008). The anthropologist Sanne Derks confirmed my understanding of the intersections between the categories of *everyday life* and *lived religion*. As far as I can tell, Dutch, Swedish, and German anthropologists and religion scholars seem to have led the way in the adoption of the term *lived religion*, a phrase that Derks has translated into Dutch as *geleefdde religie*. Sanne Derks, e-mail to the author, March 2, 2012.

²² This claim is based on extensive searches of the several terms (and related phrases) in English, French, and German in online library catalogs in North America and Europe, including Harvard University's collections. To test my preliminary results about the history of usage, I also consulted Google Books' "N-gram Viewer," an interactive online "culturomics" project based at Google and Harvard University that uses the millions of publications in Google Books and allows researchers to chart the changes in frequency of usage of a term or phrase. See Jean-Baptiste Michel, Yuan Kui Shen, Aviva Presser Aiden, Adrian Veres, Matthew K. Gray, William Brockman, the Google Books Team: Joseph P. Pickett, Dale Hoiberg, Dan Clancy, Peter Norvig, Jon Orwant, Steven Pinker, Martin A. Nowak, and Erez Lieberman Aiden, "Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books," *Science* 331, no. 6014 (January 14, 2011): 176–82. This quantitative method has flaws, of course; it makes no distinctions among types of publications, the context of usage, or the reception among readers—to mention only a few limitations—but it provides noteworthy supplemental evidence about the history of usage.

the term, but especially since the mid-twentieth century social scientists and historians writing in several European languages—and not only German, French, and English—have appealed to notions of *everyday life* and related categories to signal their intent to broaden the analytical scope of their studies of selves, societies, and the sacred.

Classic religion theorists, like the psychologist Sigmund Freud and the sociologist Max Weber, used the phrase, even if it was not the focus of their work. In his 1904 book, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Freud redirected the clinician's gaze from the couch to the street and the home as he analyzed how "unconscious psychological processes" drive ordinary people's behavior in daily life, including by excavating the "concealed meanings" of slips of the tongue and erroneous actions, as well as common experiences such as *déjà vu* and "foreboding." In that work, Freud confessed that he had those unusual experiences but dismissed them as "superstitions," since "I belong to that class of unworthy individuals before whom the spirits cease their activities and the supernatural disappears, so that I have never been in a position to experience anything that would stimulate belief in the miraculous."²³ Weber admitted he too was "religiously unmusical," but in his *Sociology of Religion* he was more sympathetic—and more suggestive—than Freud. He not only discussed *everyday life* and the *everyday world* but even introduced a category, an "ideal type," that marked off a distinct kind of piety, *alltagsreligion*, a term that has been translated as the "workaday mass religion" or, better, the "religion of everyday life."²⁴

Appeals to *everyday life* appeared in social scientific and historical publications in other European languages, including but not only Norwegian (*hverdagsliv*) and Dutch (*het dagelijks leven*).²⁵ And a tradition of "everyday life sociology" developed among Anglophone and Germanophone scholars after World War II.²⁶ It was an emphasis prompted in part by the Canadian Erving Goffman's 1959 dramaturgical account of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and by Austrian-American Peter Berger and Slovenian-German

²³ Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1915), 277–338; 312–13.

²⁴ Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon, 1993), 152, 159, 21, 24.

²⁵ For a Norwegian social scientist's use of *hverdagsliv* or everyday life, see Marianne Gullestad, *Kultur og hverdagsliv: På sporet av det moderne Norge* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1989). For a recent Norwegian work that uses a related phrase, see Sükrü Bilgiç's *Hovedfaktorer i integrering: Religion, kultur, økonomi og dagligliv* (Oslo: Kulturbro, 2008), which might be translated as "Main factors in integration: religion, culture, economy, and daily life." For a recent work in Dutch, see Marjo Buitelaar's *Islam en het dagelijks leven: Religie en cultuur onder Marokkanen* (Amsterdam: Atlas, 2006), translated as "Islam and everyday life: religion and culture among Moroccans." I am grateful to Ingvild Gilhus, Lisbeth Mikaelsson, and Einar Thomassen of the University of Bergen for helping me understand the subtle differences in the related Norwegian phrases used in scholarship. On the Dutch phrases, I am indebted to several Dutch scholars, including Anne-Marie Korte and Sanne Derks. Derks has suggested that the best variants in Dutch are *alledaagse leven* or *het leven van alledag*.

²⁶ Patricia Adler, Peter Adler, and Andrea Fontana, "Everyday Life Sociology," *Annual Review of Sociology* 13 (1987): 217–35.

Thomas Luckmann, sociologists who were influenced by Weber and Alfred Schutz and who in 1966 coauthored a widely read phenomenological analysis of “the foundations of knowledge in everyday life.”²⁷ Berger also analyzed religion in “everyday life” in *The Sacred Canopy*, and, as the British social scientist Grace Davie has pointed out, the study of “the everyday,” which includes diet, sexuality, gender, healing, and the lifecycle, had become a predominant theme in the qualitative sociology of religion on both sides of the Atlantic by the late 1990s.²⁸ Of course, anthropologists had been concerned with non-elites and daily life for a long time, and Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, and others exerted influence on diverse fields, prompting a “cultural turn” among historians during the 1970s and 1980s and an “ethnographic turn” among religious studies specialists during the 1980s and 1990s.²⁹ Further, some cultural anthropologists explicitly used the phrase *everyday life*.³⁰ More recently, European and North American sociologists, anthropologists, and historians of religion have employed variants of Weber’s phrase, “everyday religion,” including Nancy Ammerman, Grace Davie, Enzo Pace, Martin Riesebrodt, Marja-Liisa Keinänen, and Samuli Schielke.³¹

As I have noted, French social historians associated with the *Annales* school also probed the “collective mentality” of ordinary people and the long-term trajectory of everyday life, and sociologist Marcel Mauss, who discussed *la vie quotidienne* in his important study of “bodily techniques” in

²⁷ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor, 1959); Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1967), 19–46.

²⁸ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1967), 41–43; Grace Davie, “Sociology of Religion,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, ed. William H. Swatos Jr. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 1998), 483–89, and *The Sociology of Religion*, 224–44. See also Stephen Hunt, *Religion and Everyday Life*. Quantitative sociologists, who used numerical data about representative samples, hoped to discern the attitudes of a cross-section of society about all sorts of topics, from the mundane to the transcendent, even though they did not appeal explicitly to categories like “everyday life” as often as their qualitatively inclined colleagues. My account here focuses on the qualitative social sciences, but it might be helpful to incorporate quantitative approaches into my historical narrative of the human sciences.

²⁹ Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Thomas A. Tweed, “Between the Living and the Dead: Fieldwork, History, and the Interpreter’s Position,” in *Personal Knowledge and Beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*, ed. James V. Spickard, J. Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 63–74; Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 231–39.

³⁰ For example, James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 36; Eric Venbrux, *Ongelooflijk!: Religieus handelen, verhalen en vormgeven in het dagelijks leven* (Nijmegen: Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 2007); Derks, *Power and Pilgrimage*, 171; Samuli Schielke and Liza Debevec, eds., *Ordinary Lives and Grand Schemes: An Anthropology of Everyday Religion* (New York: Berghahn, 2012).

³¹ Nancy T. Ammerman, ed., *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Martin Riesebrodt, *The Promise of Salvation: A Theory of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 92; Marja-Liisa Keinänen, ed., *Perspectives on Women’s Everyday Religion* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2010); Schielke and Debevec, *Ordinary Lives and Grand Schemes*.

1935, and Henri Lefebvre, who published *Critique de la vie quotidienne* in 1947, had enormous influence on subsequent transnational conversations.³² Among Francophone scholars, the continuing impact of Mauss and Lefebvre, including the latter's Marxist analysis of "perceived, conceived, and lived" spaces shaped some of the most widely read French social theorists of the next generation, including Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michel de Certeau.³³ In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, for instance, Certeau provided a model of how to analyze "everyday practices" while accounting for both the micropolitical agency of the individual and the constraining power of social structures.

ASSESSING THE QUOTIDIAN TURN: *EVERYDAY* AND *LIVED* AS INTERPRETIVE CATEGORIES

As I turn to the task of evaluating the utility of the phrase *everyday life*—and related categories like *everyday religion* and *lived religion*—I should say that I am sympathetic to these interpretive traditions. In fact, many scholars have understood my work, especially my study of Cuban Catholic piety, as aligned with those approaches, especially the study of lived religion.³⁴ They are right to note the parallels. Further, my theory of religion attends to the body and the home and resonates with many of the themes announced by interpreters who have been associated with these scholarly lineages, including Weber, Schutz, Mauss, Lefebvre, Bourdieu, and Certeau.³⁵ My earlier emphasis on "embodied practices," "ordinary devotees," and "social space" owes much to those European theorists; so does my more recent analysis of what I called "vernacular intellectualism."³⁶ In short, I think there is much to celebrate about these cross-disciplinary traditions of social analysis and historical investigation. Most important, religion specialists—and their colleagues in allied disciplines—have helpfully shifted attention from "religion as prescribed" to "religion as practiced," from the organized religious rites and the systematized theological beliefs of elites in dominant religious institutions to the practices, artifacts, and environments of ordinary devotees in

³² Marcel Mauss, "Body Techniques," in *Sociology and Psychology: Essays by Marcel Mauss* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 105; Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne* (Paris: Grasset, 1991). For a history of the term *mentalité*, which I have translated here as collective mentality, see Volker Sellin, "Mentalität und Mentalitätsgeschichte," *Historische Zeitschrift* 241 (1985): 55–98.

³³ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991), 36–41.

³⁴ Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*; Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 111, 192; McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*, 188, 217; Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful*, 182; Derks, *Power and Pilgrimage*, 171; Hughes, *Biography of a Mexican Crucifix*, 15; Hilary Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked: American Christians and Holy Land Pilgrimage* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 15.

³⁵ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*.

³⁶ Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile*; Thomas A. Tweed, "Toward the Study of Vernacular Intellectualism," *Contemporary Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 11, no. 2 (2010): 281–86.

daily life, including in times and places that might be deemed secular.³⁷ That redirecting of scholarly attention is a praiseworthy accomplishment, on both epistemological and moral grounds: it has provided a basis for more textured and more inclusive interpretations. Consider, for example, Donald S. Lopez Jr.'s important book series that began in 1995, Princeton Readings in Religions, which "moves away from an emphasis on philosophy and the religious expressions of elite groups to represent instead a wide range of current and historical religious practices," or Robert A. Orsi's influential 1985 account of the annual *festa* in the streets of Italian Harlem in *The Madonna of 115th Street*, as well as the contributions of his collaborators in David Hall's 1997 collection *Lived Religion in America*, which aimed to uncover more about "religion as practiced and . . . the everyday thinking and doing of lay men and women."³⁸

However, the emphasis on the everyday presents some challenges when applied to the study of religion.³⁹ I want to concentrate on two problems that arise when we appeal to the study of "lived religion" or (to use Weber's phrase) "the religion of everyday life": it is difficult to identify religion scholars' subject of study and hard to avoid new interpretive imbalances.⁴⁰

³⁷ On the distinction between prescription and practice, see William A. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, 178.

³⁸ Hall, *Lived Religion in America*, vii; Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880–1950*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002). Originally published in 1985, that second edition included a new introduction that situated the book in "the study of lived religion" (xix). Orsi's book might be the most widely influential book in this interpretive tradition published in English in the past three decades. The Princeton Readings in Religions Series began in 1995 with the publication of two volumes edited by Donald S. Lopez Jr., *Religions of India in Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), and *Buddhism in Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), and has since included edited collections of sources on "practice" in other traditions (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) and regions (Japan, China, and the United States). The description of the series' aims is taken from the official web page account, available at <http://press.princeton.edu/catalogs/series/prr.html>, accessed June 18, 2014.

³⁹ The focus on "everyday life" entails methodological challenges, finding relevant sources, and employing appropriate approaches, though that is not my focus here. Of course, every approach has its distinctive methodological challenges, and those who analyze contemporary everyday practices have it somewhat easier, since they can encounter human subjects and use participant observation, taped interviews, telephone surveys, focus groups, or oral history, though none of those methods are without flaws. Those engaged in the historical analysis of the religious practices of women, children, migrants, indigenous, slaves, the working class, and the socially marginalized face especially vexing questions about how to recover the past. There are some available strategies. We can incorporate disciplinary practices from archaeology, geography, and history, for example, and we can draw on multiple sources. Historians can seek textual sources, like letters, wills, congregational records, court cases, and diaries. Usually, however, we are left to reconstruct practices from other, more mute and opaque sources such as population records, excavated fragments, historical maps, chiseled inscriptions, domestic artifacts, and vernacular architecture—or the tools of so-called ethnohistory, which presupposes a continuity between contemporary and past practices.

⁴⁰ On the first problem, which I lay out below, I am assuming that the interpreter self-identifies as a scholar of religion and, therefore, has a role-specific obligation to define the constitutive disciplinary term of the field. I have made that argument and will not repeat it here (see Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 30–33).

First, a conceptual tension and definitional problem enters as we strain to conjoin *religion*, which usually refers to the extraordinary, and the *everyday*, which usually refers to the ordinary. A distinction, which amounts to an implied opposition, surfaces as soon as we begin to ask: *when* is the everyday? and *where* is the everyday? Usage in English, French, and German (and other European languages too) suggests the word *everyday* is, in part, a temporal and spatial designation. It refers to the days of the week not reserved for regular, institutionally prescribed worship—"not Sunday," as the *Oxford English Dictionary* puts it. In the pluralistic context of late modernity, the day set aside might be Friday, Saturday, or Sunday—or another day. As the historic significance of the related phrase "ordinary time" signals, the everyday also is imagined in opposition to the ritual seasons—for many Christians that means Advent, Christmas, Lent, or Easter. So, in terms of time, the everyday (*der Alltag* or *la vie quotidienne*) refers to profane time, moments *not* set apart. It is a spatial indicator too, gesturing beyond the threshold of institutionally sanctioned worship sites (churches, temples, or mosques), outside places where ritual specialists preside at regular and prescribed rites. The everyday, which begins with the body, happens in intimate domestic spaces and the built environment beyond the home, including the street, the park, the factory, the market, the courtroom, the school, the theater, the athletic stadium, the hospital—and since the transportation and communication technologies of late modernity extend and transform space—also the airport and the Internet.⁴¹

We arrive at similar conclusions if we ask *what* the everyday is and not just about its duration or location. Both vernacular usage and scholarly practice suggest that the everyday refers to the usual, the mundane, the natural, or the routine. It is the quotidian. In turn, the everyday's implied or stated opposite is that which disrupts, suspends, or stands out from the quotidian—the unusual, the exceptional, the supernatural, the special.⁴² It is the ecstatic. Berger referred to it as "the experience of 'ecstasy' (in the literal sense of *ekstasis*—standing or stepping outside reality as commonly defined . . . the world of everyday life)."⁴³ Not all disruptions, or modes of standing out from the everyday, are religious, as Berger, Weber, and others have pointed out: not only sex and music but also dreams, drama, ritual, dance, and drugs can

⁴¹ On technology in late modernity, see Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995); Manuel Castells, *The Rise of Network Society*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000).

⁴² Speaking of antonyms, one conceptual difficulty with the phrase *lived religion* appears. What is its opposite? Surely, it is not *dead* religion. Is it something only thought but not enacted? For most users of the phrase, I think, its implied or stated opposite is religion as prescribed by institutional elites' doctrinal creeds, moral codes, or ritual guidelines. So, to return to the affirmative claim again, the category refers to religion as it is practiced in everyday life. If I am right that interpreters often intend an indirect gesture to everyday life, then the same oppositions I am identifying apply for this term too.

⁴³ Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 43.

transport individuals and groups beyond the routine.⁴⁴ So, as one social scientist has argued, societies take shape not only as social groups struggle for power over the means of production and consumption but also as varied institutions battle for control of “the means of ecstatic expression.”⁴⁵ Churches, temples, and mosques, then, can be understood as one of many “institutions of ecstasy” competing in late-modern societies, performing important functions, even if religious traditions’ “chains of memory” have been weakened or broken in secularizing western Europe.⁴⁶

Many classic and contemporary interpreters of religion have mapped the boundaries of what I am calling the quotidian and the ecstatic. In different ways, Freud, Weber, and William James did so; and since Émile Durkheim defined the sacred as “things set apart,” several traditions of the sociological, anthropological, and phenomenological study of religion have assumed that their proper subject matter was the times and spaces that devotees marked as distinct from the mundane.⁴⁷ The advantage of those interpretive traditions was that they attempted to map the boundaries between the religious and the nonreligious; a major disadvantage was that those interpreters had to exert effort to relate religion to other domains of human life—politics, society, culture, and economy—and to practices conducted outside prescribed times and beyond consecrated spaces. Disquiet with that interpretive constraint, the prevailing blindness to daily life, prompted scholars of everyday religion and lived religion to intentionally blur the boundaries. Using slightly different metaphors to make the same point—including

⁴⁴ Abraham Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (New York: Viking, 1971), 101; Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), 94–165, and *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications), 102–23.

⁴⁵ Philip H. Ennis, “Ecstasy and Everyday Life,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 6, no. 1 (1967): 47.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 44; Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *La religion pour mémoire* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993).

⁴⁷ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Penguin, 1982), 379–429; Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 44. In her book *Religious Experience Reconsidered* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), Ann Taves continued and refined this Durkheimian lineage by suggesting that our central task is to analyze how ordinary people and scholarly interpreters deem some things “special,” either because they are “ideal” or “anomalous” (36). Many other contemporary scholars of religion have worked from similar assumptions: for example, Michel Despland proposed that we understand the “supernatural” as occurrences and beings that “impinge upon one’s everyday experience” (Michel Despland, “The Supernatural,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, 2nd ed. [Detroit: Macmillan, 2005], 13:8860–64); and Paul Courtright suggested that religion’s objects “lie outside the realm of the everyday objects in time and space” (Paul Courtright, “Shrines,” in Jones, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 12:8376–78). Victor Turner’s analysis, I should remind readers here, relied on the opposition between *structure* and *anti-structure*, between everyday social relations and the feeling of *communitas* generated by the *liminal* stage of the ritual process (Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 94–130). Even contemporary interpreters of religion with a very different theoretical orientation, like the Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic Slavoj Žižek, in *On Belief: Thinking in Action* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 110ff., presuppose an opposition between the ecstatic and the quotidian: “However, is it not that ALL religion, ALL experience of the sacred, involves—or, rather, simply is—an ‘unplugging’ from the daily routine? Is this ‘unplugging’ not simply the name for the basic ECSTATIC experience of entering the domain in which everyday rules are suspended, the domain of the sacred TRANSGRESSION?”

“overlapping,” “embedding,” and “enmeshing”—many like-minded historians and social scientists have agreed with Orsi’s judgment, which he offered in his contribution to *Lived Religion in America* and repeated in the second edition of his classic work, *The Madonna of 115th Street*: religion “cannot be neatly separated from the other practices of everyday life.”⁴⁸ In the introduction to the 1985 edition of *Madonna*, Orsi actually had taken a slightly different position. He offered two definitions of religion.⁴⁹ His “more traditional” one focused on popular piety and employed, though did not define, the notion of the sacred—“the sacred rituals, practices, symbols, prayers, and faith of the people.” This definition provided self-identified scholars of religion with some clues about their topic of study—look for practices and symbols among ordinary people—but it had the same advantages and disadvantages of earlier accounts that appealed to the sacred/profane dichotomy. Interpreters were still left wondering how to mark the boundary between the two: how would one decide whether a particular practice was sacred or profane? Orsi’s second “more comprehensive” definition—“*religion* here means ‘what matters’”—actually began to erase that boundary completely. And in that way it anticipated his later position, as found in his contribution to *Lived Religion in America* and the introduction to the second edition of *Madonna*, where Orsi avoided a formal definition of religion and suggested only that “it is enmeshed in the structures of culture,” where culture means “the webs of meaning that humans spin.”⁵⁰ The principled refusal to define *religion*, or the intentional blurring of boundaries between the quotidian and the ecstatic, has produced vivid accounts that helpfully expand the analyst’s purview, as with Orsi’s memorable analysis of the smells, sounds, and sights of the New York street festival and the fine studies in Hall’s *Lived Religion in America* and Nancy Ammerman’s *Everyday Religion*. Those chapters alert us, for example, to meaning-making practices we otherwise might have overlooked or undervalued, from political activism and media viewing to gift giving and homesteading.⁵¹

But a conceptual tension and a definitional problem arise as analysts of “everyday religion” try to locate the ecstatic in the quotidian.⁵² If they insist on distinguishing too sharply between the ordinary and the extraordinary, then it is not clear how they might meaningfully talk about religion’s expression in everyday time and space, since what is set apart as special ap-

⁴⁸ Orsi, “Everyday Miracles,” in Hall, *Lived Religion in America*, 6, and *The Madonna of 115th Street*, xxi.

⁴⁹ Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, xliii.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, xx–xxi.

⁵¹ Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 69–81, 121–35; Hall, *Lived Religion in America*, 69–91, 217–42.

⁵² This strategy is not confined to US-based specialists who self-consciously align their work with the study of “lived religion.” For example, in her study of space and religion, the British religious studies scholar Kim Knott described her aim in similar ways: “my original intention in this project,” she tells the reader, “was to find a way of locating religion in everyday spaces.” Kim Knott, *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis* (London: Equinox, 2005), 229.

pears wholly discontinuous with the quotidian. That would not do, of course, since it was dissatisfaction with categories that frame religion as discontinuous that prompted the Quotidian Turn. However, if analysts try to avoid that definitional problem by blurring the boundaries between the ordinary and the extraordinary, as many scholars of lived religion and everyday religion do, then they risk creating a meaningless category that fails to identify their subject of study and is unable to distinguish what is not religious. Others have made a similar observation, including a US historian who reviewed Hall's *Lived Religion in America*: "As productive as this approach is in this volume, it raises methodological and definitional questions," he proposed. "In establishing boundaries and context for a history of lived religion, how does a historian of everyday religious practice decide *who* will be included in (or excluded from) the study? And how does such a historian decide *what* will be included (or excluded) if the line between secular and sacred is completely erased?"⁵³ And others who are more sympathetic to the Quotidian Turn, even some of the contributors to *Lived Religion in America* and *Everyday Religion*, have acknowledged the problem and called for solutions. "Although I do not believe that the intent of the recent turn to the daily necessarily excludes the experiential," sociologist Courtney Bender suggests in her chapter in *Everyday Religion*, "in some accounts daily life is emphatically viewed as mundane and ordinary." "It might be worthwhile," she continues, "to ask where, or whether, there is a place for the transcendent or the divine in this study of 'daily life.'" ⁵⁴ I agree that this is a worthwhile question. And it is difficult to see how analysts of the quotidian can talk clearly and persuasively about the "transcendent" in "daily life" if they eschew definitions of their own key terms. Readers do not need an essentializing account of the universal attributes of all religion everywhere. They do need a clearer sense of what the constitutive terms of the analysis mean, however. Below I will consider possible strategies for addressing these conceptual problems, but for now it seems sufficient to emphasize that the conceptual tension is not eased by eschewing definitions of religion altogether—or postponing the task indefinitely on empiricist grounds—since scholars inevitably assume, imply, or employ a more or less self-consciously crafted definition in their analysis.⁵⁵

⁵³ John Smolenski, "Culture, History, and the 'Religion Concept,'" *American Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (1999): 889.

⁵⁴ Courtney J. Bender, "Touching the Transcendent: Rethinking Religious Experience in the Sociological Study of Religion," in Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 215.

⁵⁵ For example, in Orsi's contribution to *Lived Religion in America*, he refuses to offer his own definition of religion but does gesture toward a particular understanding of the term. He uses the verb *to make* and endorses Jonathan Z. Smith's notion that in religion humans are "at work on the world" (9). That is a wonderfully suggestive claim, and one that, if elaborated more fully, might lead to a rich theory of religion as labor. Much is left unsaid, however, about the meaning of the term. I assume that is because of his concern to emphasize the "interplay" between "religion" and "everyday experience" (9). But if we do not know what the two terms mean, we cannot formulate an account of their interaction.

Some sophisticated interpreters who appeal to the notion of the *everyday*, including Orsi and sociologist Nancy Ammerman, the editor of *Everyday Religion*, have recognized the problems, although their shrewd but ambivalent gestures toward defining key terms have not gone far enough to resolve them. “Everyday religion,” Ammerman suggests in her introduction, has to do “with the mundane routines” as well as “the crisis and special events that punctuate those routines.” As she sets up the studies in the volume, Ammerman does not theorize that which punctuates the mundane, however. She and her fellow contributors do not stipulatively define the noun in their key phrase *everyday religion*, as I would do, but instead “ask what makes some social events and individual actions religious in the minds of the actors.”⁵⁶ That approach, which also has been advocated by those not explicitly identified with this interpretive tradition, can be very useful in tracing how and why participants and scholars deem some things religious.⁵⁷ It is less useful for other research questions and interpretive goals. And, of course, it does not resolve the definitional problems and interpretive challenges. For example, what if the interpreter concludes that some or all of the features of religion are expressed but the actors themselves do not accept the label “religious”—as with twelve-step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous? Ammerman does not address that issue but she does acknowledge that the phrase “everyday religion” raises a series of “nagging questions,” including some about the ordinary and the extraordinary: “When and where do we find experiences that participants define as religious or spiritual? Where do we see symbols and assumptions that have spiritual dimensions, even if they are not overtly defined as such?”⁵⁸ In a somewhat surprising twist, in the volume’s very suggestive conclusion, Ammerman returns to the problem of “the fuzziness around the edges of the category” and cautiously defines religious action. “It seems to me that religious activity is recognized as such because it has something to do with things that are sacred, transcendent, or beyond the ordinary.”⁵⁹ That is a wonderful start. But that Durkheimian definition fails to advance the conversation very much since it merely restates the problem by reaffirming that the extraordinary is not its opposite. Right: that is clear from an analysis of how the words are used in the language. But what do we mean by the word *extraordinary*, and how might we recognize it? Even more vexing, how can we talk about the relation between the quotidian and that which stands out from it?

Orsi also sees the conundrum as he describes religion in the mundane. To surface the tension embedded in the categorical binaries, Orsi entitled his contribution to *Lived Religion in America* “Everyday Miracles.” That is a

⁵⁶ Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 5.

⁵⁷ Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*.

⁵⁸ Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 225.

wonderfully evocative phrase that seems crafted to acknowledge and confront the conceptual challenge. And in his later work, he took another step toward confronting that challenge by offering a new definition. "Religion," he suggested, "is the practice of making the invisible visible, or concretizing the order of the universe, the nature of human life and its destiny, and the various dimensions and possibilities of human interiority itself, as these are understood in various cultures at different times, in order to render them visible and tangible, present to the senses in the circumstances of *everyday life*."⁶⁰ That suggestive phrase and that poetic definition do not fully resolve the problems, however, at least for those who want to identify the boundaries of the scholar's subject and analyze the relation between the religious and the secular. I realize that those with a principled suspicion of theory will disagree—and some scholars in this interpretive tradition urge us to resist the impulse to elevate our gaze above the empirical particulars—but I would prefer to more systematically theorize the everyday—and its implied opposite.⁶¹ That would improve Ammerman's otherwise subtle account, which leaves her key terms (*ordinary* and *transcendent*) unelaborated, and it would help in Orsi's case too. Is there not more to say about the important terms and phrases in his definition: not only *everyday* but also *making*, *invisible*, and *order of the universe*? Readers are left wondering how the invisible relates to the visible. What is "order of the universe," and how does it make an appearance in "the circumstances of everyday life"? So even the most sophisticated scholars of religion who employ the phrase *everyday life* continue to struggle with the problem of how to overcome the implied binary between the ordinary and the extraordinary. But it is not their problem alone, of course; all of us who use the phrase inherit it.

A second conceptual problem and interpretive limitation arises when scholars declare their intention to focus on everyday life: a number of other implied distinctions form as concomitants of vernacular usage and scholarly practice, whether we intend to invoke those oppositions or not. The redirected focus corrects for earlier academic blind spots, but the appeal to everyday, popular, or lived religion also wittingly or unwittingly replicates binary pairs and implies value hierarchies, usually privileging one element of the pair as the analysis reverses earlier interpretive patterns. Those interpretive patterns have varied across national borders, yet the felt need to attend to religion in everyday life emerged in most places because the scholarship had obscured what non-elites did at routine times and in mundane spaces. Between the 1880s and the 1920s, and even into the 1960s,

⁶⁰ Robert A. Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 73–74 (emphasis mine).

⁶¹ Aaron Hughes, "Boundary Maintenance: Religions as Organic-Cultural Flows: On Thomas Tweed," in *Contemporary Theories of Religion: A Critical Companion*, ed. Michael Stausberg (London: Routledge, 2009), 220–22.

religion scholars focused on the collective symbols, rituals, and myths of so-called primitive peoples, who did not resemble either the positioned Western interpreter or his (and, rarely, her) imagined audience, while many others presupposed that religion was about beliefs, elites, institutions, sacred texts, organized rituals, consecrated spaces, and the public realm. The use of the category *everyday life* signaled the interpreter's opposition to the prevailing focus and usually announced increased attention to one element in each binary. There has been enormous variation among proponents of these transnational and multidisciplinary interpretive lineages—for example, about whether to emphasize power more than meaning, biological constraints more than cultural forces, and social structures more than individual agency—but many interpreters have assumed, argued, or implied that everyday religion is more about the body than the mind, about practices and artifacts more than beliefs and values, about ordinary people more than institutional elites, the private sphere more than the public arena, more about the weekday than Sunday.⁶²

I should acknowledge that some interpreters of the quotidian have argued passionately against the (mis)reading I am offering here, insisting that the study of lived religion or everyday piety must hold together all those binaries. Ammerman, for example, acknowledges that “to start with the everyday is to privilege the experience of non-experts,” but “that does not mean that ‘official’ ideas are never important.” “Similarly,” she continues, “everyday implies activity that happens outside organized religious events and institutions, but that does not mean that we discount the influence of those institutions wield or that we neglect what happens within organized religion ‘every day.’” Further, “everyday religion may happen in both private and public life, among privileged and non-privileged peo-

⁶² Kevin O'Neill, an anthropologist who studies religion in Latin America, has criticized the lived religion approach by suggesting that attention to the *lived* has meant assuming a focus on the *local*; it has rendered that stance less able to deal with global flows and the “re-spatialization of culture” so important in the world today and so dominant in other fields, including anthropology and geography (Kevin O'Neill, “Beyond Broken: Affective Spaces and the Study of American Religion,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 81, no. 4 [December 2013]: 1093–1116). I see O'Neill's point, though I am not certain that attention to religion as practiced in the local necessarily implies a blindness to global flows. It depends, as I will suggest below, on whether the scholar employs a static or kinetic theoretical framework more than whether the study focuses on a single site. O'Neill also offers a criticism of scholars of lived religion because they have seen space as “broken,” divided between the sacred and profane. My reading of that tradition is quite the opposite. Scholars of lived religion actually have shared O'Neill's interest in blurring those boundaries. I should also point out that O'Neill also criticizes my work in that article (1094–96). I will let others decide about that critique. But he is right that I set religion apart from non-religion. I am unrepentant about that, as I have shown here, though he fails to note that my work, and that of Manuel Vásquez, whom he also criticizes, has been focused on the same “questions of globalization and transnationalism” that he has called for scholars to address (1100–1102). If he meant to say that the field of US religion has been less focused on varying scales and global flows than it should be, I concur; in fact, I made that point in an earlier review of the field (Thomas A. Tweed, “Expanding the Study of U.S. Religion: Reflections on the State of a Subfield,” *Religion* 40 [2010]: 250–58).

ple.”⁶³ Orsi, to refer again to the most influential contemporary scholar in this interpretive tradition, uses the related category *lived religion* but offers a similar caution. In his contribution to *Lived Religion in America*, Orsi emphasized that “the focus of lived religion in this volume points us to religion as it is shaped and experienced in the interplay among venues of everyday experience,” and that means it should not be interpreted in terms of divisions between mind and body, elite and popular, theology and practice. And in his introduction to the second edition of *The Madonna of 115th Street*, where he retrospectively framed that volume as a contribution to “the study of lived religion,” Orsi suggested that approach “directs attention to institutions *and* persons, texts *and* rituals, practice *and* theology, things *and* ideas—all as media of making and unmaking worlds.”⁶⁴

In these passages and others, then, some scholars have argued for holding together the interpretive binaries and correcting possible analytical imbalances, yet, I think, there might be a reason they have to insist so forcefully and remind readers so often. It is not because of any deficiency in scholarship, of course; the most prominent scholars of the everyday deserve all the acclaim they have received. Those conceptual oppositions and interpretive asymmetries emerge from their chosen scholarly idiom, including the emphasis on “everyday” and “lived” piety. There are plenty of wonderful counterexamples of studies that attend to both pairs of the oppositional categories introduced by the use of the *everyday*, as with David Hall and Anne Brown’s subtle analysis of lay and clerical attitudes and practices in Colonial New England.⁶⁵ And even those studies that tend to emphasize one side of the interpretive pairs more than the other have made crucial contributions. Consider, for example, the groundbreaking analysis of lay women’s embodied practices in the work of Orsi and Marie Griffith, another contributor to *Lived Religion in America*.⁶⁶ So I am not saying those works are not remarkably helpful for attending to people, places, and practices that had been

⁶³ Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 5.

⁶⁴ Orsi, “Everyday Miracles,” 9, and *Madonna of 115th Street*, xix.

⁶⁵ Anne S. Brown and David D. Hall, “Family Strategies and Religious Practice: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in Early New England,” in Hall, *Lived Religion in America*, 41–68.

⁶⁶ Here I mention the works of two of the finest scholars working in my subfield, nuanced books I deeply admire. Griffith and Orsi acknowledge the role of male clergy, for example, though few readers would suggest that ordained institutional elites received sustained and detailed attention either in *The Madonna of 115th Street*, a study of the “popular religion” of Italian immigrants and their children (xxxix–xl), or Marie Griffith’s *God’s Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), “a study of a female world of religious devotion” in *Women’s Aglow Fellowship* (ix). The same could be said, I think, about my own earlier work, *Our Lady of the Exile*. I mentioned some clerics, especially the Cuban American bishop, but clearly focused on the embodied practices of the laity. The concern to recover what had been lost in earlier scholarship led me to underemphasize some things that had been the focus of earlier scholars. As I note below, in Thomas A. Tweed, *America’s Church: The National Shrine and Catholic Presence in the Nation’s Capital* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), I tried to correct that interpretive imbalance, though surely I introduced new problems and displayed other limitations.

previously obscured. They are. I am saying only this: the Quotidian Turn, as transformative as it has been for me and many others, has brought gains and losses. The gains are obvious, I think, but because this interpretive stance continues to be so influential, even ascendant in religious studies today, the losses might be less obvious. Those include, I have suggested, (1) a tendency to intentionally blur the boundaries between the religious and nonreligious, thereby rendering religious studies scholars' constitutive disciplinary term unclear, and (2) a tendency to attend most fully to ordinary people and everyday life, which minimizes the significance of clergy, beliefs, ecclesiastical institutions, prescribed rituals, and consecrated spaces.

AFTER THE QUOTIDIAN TURN: WHAT NEXT?

I have made two proposals. The first concerns how to narrate the recent history of the study of religion: the label *Quotidian Turn*, I have suggested, might be useful for thinking about one cluster of approaches since the 1960s. The second proposal concerns how we might evaluate that methodological shift: I noted that the scholars associated with the Quotidian Turn accomplished an important corrective by redirecting the focus to ordinary people and everyday life, but their guiding categories, including the modifiers *everyday* and *lived*, created conceptual tensions and categorical binaries—and, despite scholars' best intentions, sometimes led to one-sided interpretations. The first proposal, which is rather ambitious, surely needs refinement. After all, the proposed label brings together many interpretive traditions from varied social contexts. I have either forced things into the box or not made the box large enough, probably both. But we cannot decide its utility in advance. Time will tell if the label *Quotidian Turn* proves helpful to those who want to chart the twists and turns in the history of the study of religion. If not, other labels should frame the historical analysis.

As for the second proposal, about the Quotidian Turn's limitations, I can imagine several kinds of responses. Two of them can be stated simply and set aside as not requiring much more reflection. You might respond by saying that you never much cared for the approaches I classify as aligned with the Quotidian Turn, perhaps because your own research focus—for example, canonical texts, intellectual history, or institutional leaders—seems to rest on different assumptions and to enact different values, while it also requires different sources and methods. So you might be indifferent to the alleged conceptual challenges and interpretive limitations or have only mild interest in accumulating more reasons to reject approaches that you already were spending little time considering. On the other hand, to mention a second possible response, you might be a vigorous advocate of the use of *everyday religion* or *lived religion* as a guiding category and remain unpersuaded by my analysis of the definitional problems and untroubled by my claims about one-sided interpretations. You might not identify as a

scholar of religion and have no disciplinary concern to define your subject matter more precisely, for example, or you might report that the boundary blurring and the interpretive slant are what you most value in these approaches. In both of these imagined responses—unqualified rejection or unqualified affirmation—there does not seem to be much more to say. We can simply agree to disagree and let many flowers bloom.

However, if you think my analysis of the accomplishments and limitations of the Quotidian Turn raises some issues worth pondering more, then the dangling question is simple: What should we do next? I see two main alternatives.

First, scholars might continue to employ the Quotidian Turn's guiding categories while trying to confront and minimize the difficulties I identify. Those who want to continue and refine this interpretive tradition might begin their reflection with the useful cautions by Ammerman and Orsi, though others will have their own thoughts about how to deal with the issues I have raised. As a sympathetic conversation partner, and someone whose work has been shaped by the Quotidian Turn, I want to make only three modest suggestions.

It might help to theorize more fully each of the key terms—the *everyday* and the *religious*—and, most important, the dynamic relation between the two. If you cannot imagine a conceptual problem in relating the quotidian and the ecstatic, then that means you probably are presupposing a framework—a sacramental theology or a phenomenological perspective, to mention two of many possibilities—that provides an idiom for theorizing their interrelation. If so, it would help to surface those presuppositions. If you insist that you have no presuppositions, we again reach a point where there is not much more to say, since I think presuppositions are inevitable. However, if you are cautious because much of what has passed as theory rests on claims that go beyond the evidence—the assertion that religion or secularity is the same in all times and places—then there is much more to say. I understand the principled resistance to this sort of theorizing, but I think there are ways to clarify lexical usage and refine scholarly practice without making the contestable empirical claim that the interpreter's categories, including *religion*, are “universal.”⁶⁷ A bit more theorizing and a few more stipulative definitions—those that stipulate a term's meaning for a particular project—might help with some of the conceptual problems I have identified. That might nudge us toward accounts that identify religion scholars' subject of study more clearly and bridge the implied binaries more fully.⁶⁸

As you theorize those key terms—the *religious* and the *everyday*—you also could develop a continuum or spectrum model. You might suggest that

⁶⁷ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 36–37, 40–41, 55, 78.

⁶⁸ Orsi seems to agree with my suggestion here: “Religion comes into being in ongoing, dynamic relationship with the realities of everyday life” (Orsi, “Everyday Miracles,” 7).

we should talk about *more or less*, not *either-or*. You might classify diverse spaces, times, practices, experiences, narratives, and artifacts on a continuum between two conceptual poles and understand the scholar's task as analyzing how the things you are studying are deemed more or less "special," "singular," "sacred," or "set apart" by scholars and/or by devotees.⁶⁹ This approach can be very useful to talk about practices as more or less religious, or quasi-religious. However, that continuum model is much less useful if scholars resist the task of defining its conceptual poles—the everyday and the religious—for how would we know where to classify a practice or space along the spectrum if we do not know what those polar categories mean?⁷⁰

Finally, some minor terminological revisions could help. For example, those who want to retain the emphasis on the everyday might distinguish *religion every day* (self-identified devotees' daily practices within or beyond ecclesiastical boundaries as part of the prescribed conduct of the faith) and *everyday religion* (practices conducted by different people, including the avowedly ambivalent and agnostic, in diverse spaces outside churches, temples, and mosques). Taking the lead from Orsi, it also might help to create compound categories that combine both terms of the polarizing binaries, since categories can redirect attention in useful ways, just as the phrase *everyday life* originally shifted the focus to that which had been excluded in earlier studies. In this case, however, those new compound categories and hyphenated phrases might signal an attempt to hold together what language tries to pull apart. Scholars thereby might anticipate objections about one-sidedness and encourage investigators to consider the full complexity of religious life. In my theory of religion, for example, I argued that religions are "confluences of organic-cultural flows," so I could conjoin the biological and the cultural, body and mind, and name the site where embodied brains meet coded cultures.⁷¹ In a similar way, for the study of the everyday, those sympathetic to the study of everyday religion or lived religion might consider the potential uses of compound nouns and hyphenated categories like Orsi's *everyday miracles*. It might make scholars slightly less likely to focus exclusively on one side of the binary at the expense of the other. It might remind interpreters to attend fully to the routine as well to that which breaks it.

A second alternative response—and the one I favor—is to maintain the concern to attend to ordinary people and everyday life but to use different

⁶⁹ Knott, *Location of Religion*, 61; Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 28–35; Thomas A. Tweed, "Space," *Material Religion* 7, no. 1 (2011): 116–23.

⁷⁰ Neither Taves nor Knott are interested in defining religion. In the piece on "Space" I cite above, I conditionally endorsed this continuum approach but found it less useful, as I actually tried to interpret particular practices—for example, of sports fans and memorial visitors—since it did not offer any guidance about where that practice fell on the continuum, unless I presupposed my own definition of religion and its claims about the boundaries between the secular and the religious.

⁷¹ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 54–69.

orienting categories, theoretical frameworks, and methodological principles. How might we do all that? Well, in many ways, I think. But it seems unfair to offer criticisms and not provide suggestions about what we might do differently. So to give you some idea of what I have in mind, I will risk the embarrassment of being too self-referential and say a bit more about how I have tried to maintain my earlier concern for ordinary people and everyday life while also trying to address the limitations I saw in my own work and that of my like-minded colleagues.

Using alternative categories that do not directly mention ordinary people and everyday life actually can allow the interpreter to attend to both, and with fewer—or at least different—difficulties. Let me just mention three terminological alternatives that might be more useful: presence/absence, flows/channels, and crossing/dwelling.

I have used all three in my own work, though other scholars have made a good case for *presence/absence* as analytic categories. In a suggestive but overlooked essay from the 1970s, the historian of religion Charles Long dealt with the exclusion of African Americans by talking about who is “visible” and “invisible” in history and in our historical accounts, and Orsi, whose work has focused on Catholics, has persuasively suggested that the theme of “presence is central to the study of lived Catholic practice—the study of Catholicism in everyday life is about the mutual engagement of men, women, children, and holy figures present to each other.”⁷² Extending the insights of Long and Orsi, I used *presence*—and also *absence*—in a recent historical study of a Marian shrine. I found that strategy had advantages, even if it had its limitations too. As I delineated corporeal and incorporeal presence, I was able to talk about the ways devotees understood suprahuman beings—God, Mary, and the saints—as present in their lives, so it was helpful for writing religious history. More important, I think that theme—and my consideration of ten factors in the interpretation of architecture, including the “makers,” “donors,” and “users” of the space—allowed me to avoid overemphasis on one element in the usual binaries.⁷³ For example, I could talk about the bishops and architects who planned the building and the lay devotees and women religious who used it. I could note the role of theological beliefs about the church, the saints, and the modern world as well practices like donation, prayer, and pilgrimage. The theme of *presence* allowed me to document those who traveled there and those who had an incorporeal presence through mailed donations and devotional letters. And, most important for preserving the originating motives of the Quotidian Turn, that strategy allowed me to attend to the presence of a wide range of devotees—including women, children, immigrants, Amer-

⁷² Charles H. Long, “Civil Rights—Civil Religion: Visible People and Invisible Religion,” in *American Civil Religion*, ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 211–20; Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 73.

⁷³ Tweed, *America’s Church*, 16–19, 241–45.

indians, and the poor—and to take note of who was absent because of racism, including African Americans.

The theme of *presence*, as I understand it, is a spatial trope related to other interpretive categories that can reduce—though never eliminate—the conceptual and practical difficulties. Presence can be understood as a form of *dwelling*. Religions, I have argued, position devotees in four *chronotopes* or time-spaces: the body, the home, the homeland, and the cosmos.⁷⁴ This approach considers varying social spaces, from the intimate, routine, and profane to the formal, grand, and consecrated. In particular, by attending to the body and the home, a wider range of characters enter our narratives of religious life. An interpretive space opens, for example, for analyzing both the elites' prescriptions about embodiment and family as well as how those prescriptions are enacted, revised, and resisted in vernacular practice.

The theme of *dwelling*, in my account, is always related to another theme, *crossing*, and I have used that spatial trope—as well as the aquatic metaphor *flow*—to propose a kinetic theoretical framework and a set of methodological principles. Religion is as much about crossing, or moving across space, as it is about dwelling, or finding one's place. I have suggested that “religions enable and constrain *terrestrial crossings*, as devotees traverse natural terrain and social space beyond the home and across the homeland; *corporeal crossings*, as the religious fix their attention on the limits of embodied existence; and *cosmic crossings*, as the pious imagine and cross the ultimate horizon of human life.”⁷⁵ Despite the richness of many studies of everyday religion and lived religion, most interpreters presuppose a theory of culture and religion that is still too static, imagining a religious world filled by stable objects that exist independently of substantial selves. Their presumed framework does not account for the dynamism of religious life, and the concomitant scholarly usage inclines the interpreter to unwittingly harden the categorical distinctions into conceptual oppositions that can lead to one-sided accounts. It might help, I think, to put the everyday—and the ecstatic—in motion, to employ a more relational and kinetic view of religion and its wider cultural context. The scheme I have proposed certainly still makes distinctions—dwelling and crossing—yet, although I cannot fully substantiate this point here, those distinctions do not set up the conceptual problems I have identified with the Quotidian Turn's lexicon: the problem of how to talk, for example, about both ordinary people and elites, everyday spaces and consecrated sites, beliefs and practices, the quotidian and the ecstatic. It reduces the conceptual problems by sidestepping them. It shifts the idiom—and the implied framework and methodology. Using *crossing* as an analytic category, as I did in *America's Church*, allows for attention to both sides

⁷⁴ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 97–122.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 123–56.

of those usual binary pairs, as the interpreter traces the movements to and from the shrine and attends to all the people, things, and practices that crossed the building's threshold.

To put the quotidian and the ecstatic in motion, we also might employ aquatic metaphors, as the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai did in his analysis of cultural flows and as I have done in my theory of religious flows and in my recent methodological proposals.⁷⁶ In that idiom, which reflects a more processive theoretical framework, the “mutual inter-causality” of the biological and the cultural can be imagined in terms of “confluences,” and politics, society, and economy can be understood as converging “streams” that impact religions as they emerge from the swirl of transfluvial currents.⁷⁷ So the institutional channels of the quotidian—political organizations, social relations, and economic forces—transform the more or less ecstatic spaces, which become sites where power is negotiated as meaning is made. The kinetic and interrelated spaces and times of the ecstatic, or that which stands out from the quotidian, are produced from the swirl of transfluvial currents and, in turn, exert causal influence as they mix with other currents along the way. In this kinetic account, with its emphasis on transfluence, many of the unintended binaries that form when scholars appeal to religion in everyday life are lost in the swirling flows. We certainly can still distinguish bodies and minds, elites and laity, beliefs and practices, churches and the myriad spaces beyond their threshold, Sunday morning and the rest of the time. The categorical distinctions seem less fixed and final, however.

This theoretical framework is more than a metaphor in search of a method, even if I have only gestured toward a fuller methodological proposal here. Most important, this framework affords a vantage from which we can honor the originating concerns of the Quotidian Turn—to attend to ordinary people and everyday life—while offering a richer account of the kinetics of religious practice that bridges categorical binaries and expands our narratives' characters and settings. It can help us analyze ordinary people *and* institutional elites in ecclesiastical *and* mundane spaces.⁷⁸

My approach is not without its own limitations, and its guiding theoretical picture is not the only way to preserve the Quotidian Turn's insights.

⁷⁶ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 59–69, “Theory and Method in the Study of Buddhism: Toward Translocative Analysis,” *Journal of Global Buddhism* 12 (2011): 17–32, and “Following the Flows: Diversity, Santa Fe, and Method in Religious Studies,” in *Understanding Religious Pluralism: Perspectives from Theology and Religious Studies*, ed. Peter Phan and Jonathan Ray (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 1–19.

⁷⁷ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 60.

⁷⁸ Some other scholars sympathetic to the Quotidian Turn also have argued for more inclusive accounts. For example, William Taylor endorsed a “synoptic approach” to the study of Indians under colonial rule in Mexico, which meant for him “keeping in mind and under study as many of the actors, dimensions, and primary sources of an episode or structure as I can manage, without claiming there will be a sum total” (Taylor, *Shrines and Miraculous Images*, 2, 90).

Readers might find better ways to proceed. Further, those who are already convinced that we need a kinetic theory might prefer alternative categories that aim for similar ends. My framework relies on aquatic tropes about *flows* and spatial images about *crossing*, but other root metaphors can do helpful interpretive work too, including James Clifford's *routes*, Manuel Vásquez's *networks*, and Anna Tsing's *movements*.⁷⁹ My goal is not to champion a framework or a category as the only one. That would be odd and inconsistent with my pragmatic approach, which suggests all frameworks and categories are only more or less useful for a scholar's particular purposes. They all have blind spots—as do mine.⁸⁰ But I thought it would help to illustrate what I had in mind by making a few tentative suggestions, if only to generate counterproposals. My primary concerns are modest: to suggest a label for one interpretive pattern and prompt more thinking about how to assess it. Whether or not you find my alternative categories promising, I hope we can have a more robust and sustained conversation about the history, uses, and limits of the scholarly trajectories that have highlighted ordinary people and everyday life. Perhaps we can self-consciously evaluate those and other analytic categories, acknowledging their accomplishments and limitations and, most of all, trying to hold together what language pulls apart, including but not only the *quotidian* and the *ecstatic*.

⁷⁹ Clifford, *Routes*; Anna Tsing, "The Global Situation," in *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, ed. Jonathan Xavier Inda and Renato Rosaldo (London: Blackwell, 2002), 475; Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 297–319.

⁸⁰ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 14–15, 21–22, 60–61, 171–78.

Book Reviews

SCHROEDER, JOY. *Deborah's Daughters: Gender Politics and Biblical Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. 384 pp. \$74.00 (cloth).

The story of Deborah in Judges 4–5 reflects, kaleidoscopically, the visions, values, and fears of its centuries of readers. As Joy Schroeder shows in her remarkably comprehensive book, *Deborah's Daughters: Gender Politics and Biblical Interpretation*, the resulting prisms of meaning contained every possible interpretation of the woman under the palm tree. From submissive wife to valiant military leader, from haughty woman to model of humility—Deborah has been used to justify women's preaching, legitimate their religious authority, and bolster their political voices. She has also been used to restrict women from these roles through negative readings—Deborah as monster—and through exceptional readings—Deborah as the weak vessel used by God to shame the strong. Even her name, which means “bee,” has been understood to invoke everything from the industry of the hive, to the sweetness of honey, to the rebuke of a sting.

The great gifts of *Deborah's Daughters* are its broad inclusiveness and its succinct, insightful analyses. Schroeder traces readings of Deborah across chronological, cultural, and religious boundaries. She divides the book into six chapters, defined by long chronological periods beginning in the ancient world and ending in the twentieth century. In each chapter, she includes the voices of Jewish and Christian, lay and religious, and female and male interpreters. She shows that Judges 4 and 5 have been problematic in all of these contexts, not only because Deborah's story challenged cultural constraints on women's leadership but also because the text is indeterminate about any number of details, from Deborah's marital status, to the meaning of “Lapridoth,” to her activities and status as a judge.

Schroeder helpfully explicates a variety of strategies that readers have employed over the centuries to resolve these textual problems including allegorical readings, which “can tame disturbing texts” (such as Martin Luther's reading of Deborah as *Ecclesia* and her persecution by King Jabin as the persecution of the Church by heretics); readings that blatantly ignored or contradicted key elements of the narrative; and readings that attempted to reconcile Deborah's story with other Biblical texts, especially New Testament injunctions about women's behavior in 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 11 (21). She also explores strategies used to mitigate the text's more radical implications by redirecting its application. For example, following Joan Ferrante, she argues that Abelard gave a full account of Deborah's powerful military courage but redirected the application of her example to cloistered women religious engaged in the spiritual struggle of prayer and asceticism (45).

Schroeder is carefully neutral and even-handed throughout the book, allowing Deborah's diverse interpreters to speak for themselves whether they were calling on Deborah to champion women's ordination (for instance, AME bishop Vashti McKenzie, who wrote of Deborah: “She was assigned, called, and set aside by God as a prophetess and a judge. . . . Her being a prophetess and a judge was not dependent upon the whims and fancies of her society, but upon the call of God.”) or contending against such efforts (evangelist John Rice: “Deborah was not a preacher, not a leader. . . . She did not take authority over men and did not teach men. She simply delivered a brief message from God to Barak.”) (199–200). Quotations throughout the book are well

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chosen and distilled, giving lively insights into readers and periods without weighing down the text. The book is also enhanced by the inclusion of nontextual sources. Schroeder analyzes bible illustrations and paintings of Deborah from the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries, attending to subtle visual cues that indicate shifts in her portrayal including intimacy with Barak (64–66), the prominence of her figure (99–100), strength (122–23), and femininity and pathos (186–89). She also analyzes other cultural sources, such as George Frideric Handel's 1733 oratorio *Deborah* (135–38). Although Schroeder does not attempt to measure the audiences or the cultural saturation of various interpretations, nontextual sources allow her to examine readings of Deborah that reached broader publics than letters or theological treatises may have.

Schroeder is particularly attentive to the persistence and reinterpretation of rabbinic sources. While she devotes more space to Christian than Jewish readings, her consistent attention to the significance and influence of rabbinic interpretations of Deborah enriches the book. However, I wish Schroeder had been clearer about how these sources were encountered. She describes various Christian interpreters as being familiar with rabbinic traditions without clarifying if they were actually reading these sources or if they were encountering them in other Christian writings (29, 78, 83, 97, 128, 208). Thus it is not clear if the (primarily one-way) conversation between Jewish and Christian interpretation persisted over time, or if a set of rabbinic interpretations of Deborah became standardized and transmitted through Christian sources.

Despite that, such moments of cross-cultural connection and conversation relieve the tendency of the book to present a parade of readers and contexts. Nearly encyclopedic in its coverage, there are sometimes choppy shifts in content. For instance, Schroeder includes just one paragraph on Jonathan Edwards, sandwiched between Matthew Henry and John Wesley, that mainly acknowledges that he had little to contribute to the conversation on Deborah aside from a standard typological reading (129). However, in many cases, Schroeder's necessarily brief accounts provide insightful and often moving glimpses into the lives and thought of Deborah's many readers. Her single page on Regina Jonas, the first ordained female rabbi later murdered at Auschwitz, evokes Jonas's spirit and intellectual agility in reinterpreting rabbinic texts on Deborah to promote woman's ordination (196). Schroeder is also successful in synthesizing these many brief readings and offering genuine (if not always new) insights into historical contexts. For example, Schroeder classifies the early seventeenth century as a period in which many readers used Deborah to defend against religious misogyny, while she classifies the years between first and second wave feminism (1920s–1960s) as a period in which many readers reflected intently on Deborah's perceived failings as a homemaker (chaps. 4 and 6).

Deborah's Daughters is a wonderful resource for readers interested in the history of biblical interpretation and the roles of women in Christianity and Judaism. Not merely an intellectual history of interpretation, the book is grounded in the lives and cultures of Deborah's many interpreters. Despite Schroeder's measured neutrality, the collected stories of so many women striving to participate fully in their diverse religious cultures engenders awe at the power of Deborah's inspiration over so many centuries.

ELIZABETH HAYES ALVAREZ, *Temple University*.

The Journal of Religion

SHERWOOD, YVONNE. *Biblical Blaspheming: Trials of the Sacred for a Secular Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. xiii+387 pp. \$103.00 (cloth); \$39.99 (paper).

Biblical Blaspheming: Trials of the Sacred for a Secular Age by Yvonne Sherwood is an important book that will be welcomed by cultural critics and students of religion, especially those interested in the role that the Bible has played, and continues to play, in the public realm. Biblical scholars of different stripes ought to attend to Sherwood's book too, for she raises challenges regarding the way biblical critics regularly go about their work.

Like the biblical texts she explores and reveals to be startlingly intractable to contemporary, post-Enlightenment interpretation, Sherwood's book is not for the faint of heart—neither in its entirety (reaching nearly 400 pages) nor in its heady, intellectually rich component chapters. Sherwood reads both particular biblical texts and the Bible itself as a cultural symbol in light of a variety of cultural phenomena and critical, academic discourses, including modern art expositions and art theory, premodern biblical interpretation, the practice of masochism, and a host of contemporary authors whom many will call postmodern. Sherwood's book, composed of five parts and ten chapters, is remarkably wide ranging. Nonetheless, it holds together because every chapter touches on the book's main claim—namely, that the "Liberal Bible" (4) functions as a cultural symbol to undergird contemporary liberal society and institutions.

For Sherwood, the Liberal Bible serves as the source of reason, law, democracy, and indeed the modern liberal state. Hence, even in ostensibly secular contexts the Bible can be fiercely defended against perceived attack (as illustrated in pt. 1). However, as Sherwood demonstrates, the radical words of the prophets, which point to a violent and dangerous deity (or sacred realm), along with the account in Genesis 22 of a person (nearly) sacrificing his child at a deity's command, simply refuse to be ultimately accommodated or assimilated into the liberal. Thus, the texts themselves debunk the mythology of the Bible as the source of all things liberal and "the belief that the Bible and the modern state are, *loosely speaking, on the same page*" (6). Unmasking the Liberal Bible also has real contemporary political import for Sherwood, for it can "prompt us to investigate the strategic (historical) narrowness of modern 'critique' and its political effects" (374)—and here Sherwood has in mind the project of propping up Western, liberal society with the symbolic support of the Liberal Bible at the expense of a constructed, uncritical, nonmodern, and illiberal Muslim Other (esp. chap. 10).

For Sherwood it seems that just by reading closely the actual Bible, the fragility of the Liberal Bible is exposed. Of course, liberal biblical scholars (i.e., scholars trained in historical-critical biblical studies and not merely theologically liberal scholars) have often delighted in getting their students to just read the actual Bible and thereby discover that the real Bible is neither the Bible of their basic religious education nor the Bible of popular imagination. But Sherwood is doing more than playing your typical professor in an "Introduction to the Bible" class. Her analysis reveals how professional biblical interpreters, who critique the often wild, unruly, violent, and decidedly illiberal biblical text, end up (almost) inevitably translating the Bible—the prophets and the Akedah in any case—back into an acceptable liberal idiom. The prophets thus become primarily the font of a liberal tradition of social justice, rather than, say, the source of a scatological discourse of "death, entropy, disease, nakedness, rape, and waste" (171). The Akedah, similarly, teaches us about giving your all for God rather than being about murder in the name of (fundamentalist) religion (chap. 10). Biblical scholars thus perform and reinforce the Bible's place as a key sacred symbol of Western liberalism.

Sherwood's exposition of the symbolic roles different Bibles (e.g., Locke's, Filmer's) played in Early Modern England and the social-political conflicts lying behind these different Bibles (chap. 9) is engaging in its own right and helpfully illustrates what Sherwood means by the idea of a Liberal Bible and how it might be said to symbolically undergird liberal social-political institutions.

Sherwood also challenges what she views as a binary implicitly invoked by much liberal, professional criticism—where the modern is quintessentially associated with reason and “the rise of critique,” while the premodern remains mired in the “thrall of ‘religion’” (368). Sherwood not only shows how premodern readers of the Bible were imminently critical—something that biblical scholars more and more recognize—she also demonstrates how contemporary scholarly, critical identity is itself deeply invested in maintaining the binary between the modern and the premodern. The modern critic, Sherwood explains, is compelled into “taking up a position as a subject before a religious object” and by virtue of this must leave behind a position of faith in a way that premodern religious and critical voices were not required to (371). Throughout, Sherwood also shows the ultimate instability of the liberal subject that was/is necessary for the practice of professional biblical criticism as it has been (and usually continues to be) undertaken—namely, in a historical-critical vein.

Sherwood's problematization of the scholarly liberal subject is important for thinking about what academic biblical studies might become in the future. The entire book yearns to move beyond (and in fact does move beyond) a biblical criticism that has been so determined by a liberal subjectivity that produced as its only legitimate mode of critique the historical criticism that has dominated professional biblical studies in modernity. By critiquing liberal criticism and the subjectivity from which it derives, Sherwood wants to pass into a new kind of biblical studies: one that can deftly and regularly look more deeply at religion and culture, as well as the history of reception, ethics, and the political effects of the Bible and biblical interpretation—instead of one that merely concerns itself with questions of origins, authors, editors, and historical developments.

Sherwood's call to move beyond historical criticism in biblical studies is not a new exhortation. But it is one that is rarely performed in such an intellectually sophisticated manner as Sherwood offers in *Biblical Blaspheming*.

TIMOTHY J. SANDOVAL, *Brite Divinity School*.

WAZANA, NILI. *All the Boundaries of the Land: The Promised Land in Biblical Thought in Light of the Ancient Near East*. Translated by Liat Qeren. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013. xiv+352 pp. \$59.50 (cloth).

All the Boundaries of the Land offers a nuanced and persuasive portrait of biblical texts from a variety of genres that depict the boundaries of the biblical Promised Land. Refreshingly, in a field too often isolated from the rest of the academy, Nili Wazana situates her discussion of ancient literature within a larger scholarly conversation about the nature of political boundaries. In dialogue with the work of several geographers, she helpfully distinguishes between borders and frontiers. The former she associates with a multicentric worldview, which acknowledges other, independent centers of power over land. The latter she associates with a monocentric worldview, which acknowledges only one legitimate center and its chaotic peripheries inhabited by barbarous peoples. This theoretically engaged approach to the topic is most welcome.

Throughout, Wazana remains sensitive to the differences between modern and ancient approaches to territoriality. The book's theses are developed robustly from an-

cient evidence, rather than merely hypothesized on the basis of modern theory or contemporary ethnographic parallels. Among other biblical texts, she treats several promising land to Israel's ancestors (Gen. 12:7, 13:14–17, 15:7, 18–21, 17:8, 24:7, 28:4, 13, 35:12, 48:4), several promising world dominion (Gen. 15:18–21; Exod. 23:28–31; Deut. 1:7–8, 11:24; Josh. 1:3–4), “The Land of Canaan with Its Various Boundaries” document (Num. 34:1–12), Ezekiel's vision of future land (Ezek. 47:13–48:29), the “Book of Conquest” (Joshua 1–12), “The Land That Yet Remains” (Josh. 13:1–6), the “Book of Settlement” (Josh. 13:7–21:45), and a large number of additional texts providing oblique information about the dimensions of the “Land of Canaan” but that do not directly treat the promise of land and its fulfillment. In addition to such boundary texts, she surveys a large number of spatial merisms in the Hebrew Bible that give expression to the range of Israel's territory—for example, “from Dan to Beersheba” (Judg. 20:1; 1 Sam. 3:2; 2 Sam 3:10, 17:11, 24:2, 16; 1 Kings 5:5).

A tremendous strength of the volume is that it analyzes each of these biblical texts independently, with careful attention to “the unique character of each particular text, its specific agenda, and its world view” (298). For example, Wazana delineates how land promise texts containing spatial merisms and explicit border accounts differ from one another (104–6) and argues that the former “do not refer to a defined, specific territorial unit” (125). Rather, spatial merisms in Deut. 11:24–25 and Josh. 1:3 are best understood against the background of the utopian and imperialistic language of the Neo-Assyrian period. Wazana's attention to the unique character of each document is particularly convincing in her treatment of Joshua (185–276), where she identifies four views of the Promised Land. She argues, for example, that the Book of Settlement (Josh. 13:7–21:45) is an independent source; “It does not refer to any of the other views, nor does it engage in any polemics with them” (299). Yet all four views “share a common multicentric perspective, in which the land forms a delineated and delimited territorial unity promised by God to the Israelites” (301). Through philologically sensitive close reading of dozens of biblical texts, Wazana carefully maps the varied biblical conception of the Promised Land.

Wazana reads biblical texts in light of related literature from other ancient Near Eastern cultures. She attends particularly to documents describing the expansion of the Hittite kingdom in the Late Bronze Age and royal inscriptions rooted in ideologies of warfare and territory in the Neo-Assyrian period. For example, her survey of literary depictions of the Umma-Lagash border in Sumer and of several other ancient Near Eastern borders provides a cogent portrait of the ancient Near Eastern concept of a border (22–44). Or, for example, she argues that “like the description of the Tarhuntašša border, the primary interest of the biblical text [Josh. 17:7–13] was not to identify the property of the tribes but to record their territory for the central administration—that is, for tax-collection purposes” (268).

Wazana pursues her theses in relation to the territoriality of tribes, nations, and empires. I wonder how the concepts she explores relate to concepts operating at other levels of society. For example, in my judgment, the biblical portrayal of the allotment of tribal territories in Joshua 13–19 is rooted in the ancient Near Eastern concept of family inheritance by lot. As Raymond Westbrook observed, “In order to impose a theoretical framework on the political reality of the conquest of Canaan, the narrator adopted the paradigm of family law, and for that purpose reduced a political unit, the nation, to the level of the unit that was more properly associated with property law—the family” (*Property and the Family in Biblical Law* [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991], 23). As such, the book's theses would only have been strengthened by a discussion of ancient Near Eastern texts related to family inheritance (for example, compare the preferential treatment given to Caleb in Josh. 14:9–14 and Law Code of Hammurabi § 165) and of ancient Near Eastern land sale documents (for example, Gary Beckman, *Texts*

from the Vicinity of Emar in the Collection of Jonathan Rosen [Padua: Sargon, 1996], nos. 2, 7, 9, 16, 22, 24, 29, 34, 52, 81, 91), which often contain descriptions of the boundaries of the property being transferred. I share Wazana's conviction that ancient Near Eastern sovereign-vassal land relations form the conceptual backdrop to many biblical land border texts (for example, 276). I wonder how her treatment of this theme would have been enhanced by a discussion of certain land grant texts from Ugarit that contain a double-transfer clause and that clarify the nature of ancient Near Eastern royal administrative rights in land at another level of society (for example, see Claude Schaeffer, ed., *Textes accadiens et hourrites des archives est, ouest et centrales*, vol. 3 of *Le Palais Royal d'Ugarit*, Mission de Ras Shamra 6 [Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1955], 45–46, 50–51, 52–53, 58–59, 63–64, 86–88, 96–98, 102–5, 153–54, 166–67).

This innovative and carefully argued volume offers a compelling portrait of a major literary topos in the Hebrew Bible: the boundaries of Israel's Promised Land. Wazana offers fresh readings of biblical texts, especially in her treatment of the book of Joshua, and she synthesizes these into a cogent framework for understanding this fundamental, multifaceted biblical concept.

STEPHEN C. RUSSELL, *John Jay College, CUNY.*

BOCHET, ISABELLE, ed. *Augustin, philosophe et prédicateur: Hommage à Goulven Madec; Actes du colloque international organisé à Paris les 8 et 9 septembre 2011*. Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 195. Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2012. xiv+590 pp. 45.79€.

Goulven Madec was one of the great Augustine scholars of his generation, and this fine volume is a fitting tribute to the multifacetedness of his involvement in the study of Augustine. Since he died in 2008, Madec unfortunately could not be present at the conference nor would he probably have agreed to such an honorable occasion, according to the editor. But he would no doubt have been proud of the *fête augustinienne* this volume represents (vii). It is published by the Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, with which Madec was associated from 1958 until 2007.

While Madec's work focused on Augustine, it also looped around him in rather interesting ways, as Madec worked on Ambrose as well as on John Scottus Eriugena. For the study of the latter, he has a threefold importance: he did an early critical edition of Eriugena's *On Divine Predestination* in the series *Corpus Christianorum* (CCCM 50 [Turnhout: Brepols, 1978]); he made an index with all of Eriugena's sources that is still of considerable importance to the field (*Jean Scot et ses auteurs* [Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1988]); and he wrote various articles underscoring the Augustinian character of Eriugena's thought, an unusual position in a field where consensus seems to have it that Eriugena is more an Eastern thinker than a Western thinker. While Eriugena does not feature in this volume, its fifth and final part offers an interesting array of other moments of Augustinian transmission and reception. Thus Clemens Weidmann discusses how Augustine himself was an organizer of texts, ranging from his ordering of biblical texts to his handling of documents in the Donatist controversy (507–22). Next, Philippe Sellier discusses Pascal in relation to Augustine's anti-Manichaean work *Contra Faustum* (523–36). It is quite surprising to learn that Pascal derived some of the crucial building blocks for his own lapidary apologetic arguments in the *Pensées* from this work. He especially took to the idea that Christianity is centered around love and that, where Old Testament passages would seem to contradict that, they should be read as speaking in *figurae*, mysteries or prophecies. Emmanuel Falque links Augustine to twentieth-century phenomenology, which

he does in a very rich way, thereby contextualizing the debate on the phenomenological Augustine popularized in the United States by Jean-Luc Marion's *In the Self's Place: The Approach of St. Augustine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012). While admiring Marion's study (546–48), Falque does not want to choose just yet between seeing Augustine as either philosophical or theological, either metaphysical or phenomenological, demanding more nuance before deciding the issue.

If we go backward through the volume, we find that part 4, entitled "Augustin et le service de la parole," deals with preaching. It has as one of its highlights a critical edition with comments by F. Dolbeau of sermon 139, one of the twenty-six previously unknown sermons he found in Mainz in 1990 that have generated important new insights into Augustine's preaching. Dolbeau's contribution here does not disappoint. He dates sermon 139 on John 10:30 ("I and the Father are one") to the period between 420–30 CE and sees it as a case of *disputatio* inside the genre of *praedicatio*, even if the sermon is not polemical. Instead, it seems to be a sermon for an audience known to Augustine that he wanted to lead from faith to understanding so as to help block the recent resurgence of Arianism in North Africa. The absence of polemics is because there would not have been Arians in the audience; instead, Augustine asks their fellow-Christians present to pray for them and help persuade them to embrace Catholic orthodoxy.

Parts 2 and 3 deal respectively with Augustine and Porphyry and with Augustine and Philosophy, and so have much in common. In part 3 the contributions by B. Stock on "The Soliloquy: Transformations of an Ancient Philosophical Technique" (315–48) and by O. Boulnois on "Philosophia christiana: Une étape de la pensée Augustinienne" (349–69) are worth special mention. While Augustine invented the actual term *soliloquium*, he actually taps into an older technique, and Stock's informed discussion of Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius provides us with a very useful, indeed philosophical, contextualization of his technique, which he goes on to discuss in Plotinus and Augustine, and rounds off with Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*. Boulnois revisits the question whether there is such a thing as Christian philosophy, which was initially denied by E. Bréhier in 1931, affirmed by E. Gilson in 1932 in the sense that Christianity historically contributed to philosophy, only to be denied again by Heidegger in 1973, who claimed that Christianity's contribution had removed philosophy from its Greek roots and thereby from its radical task (349–51). Going through various Augustinian works, Boulnois proves Bréhier wrong ("il faut être bien myope, pour ne pas voir tout ce qu'Augustin a apporté de nouveau en philosophie" [363]). For Augustine, Christian philosophy incorporates Greek philosophy, but only Christianity can deliver the ethical liberation that Neoplatonism merely promises. Boulnois ends with the question why Augustine used *philosophia christiana* for the understanding of faith and not the known term *theologia*. He answers that the truth of Christianity belonged to the realm of natural theology for Augustine, but since ordinary Christians had no need to know about its technical division into moral, physical, and logical theology, he dropped the term *natural theology* and even *theology*. For the same reasons of simplicity, as first argued by Madec as the honoree of the volume, Augustine rarely actually used *philosophia christiana*, which for him included revelation, speaking much rather about *doctrina christiana*. Yet for Boulnois, he intended thereby something that would later become known as theological rationality (369).

It pays off to read part 1 last, as the multifaceted contributions of Madec as organizer and modern liaison of an increasingly global movement of Augustinian studies take on more meaning when seen in the light of the later parts. Besides a bibliography (3–14), the introduction by editor Isabelle Bochet nicely brings together Madec's work and the contributions in the volume under the rubrics of philosophy

and preaching, wisdom and word, which for Madec as for Augustine were united in the figure of Christ (15–31). Given the volume's richness and decent pricing, and with a nod to both Augustine and Madec, this book should grace the shelves of all North American Augustine scholars.

WILLEMEN OTTEN, *University of Chicago*.

CAMERON, MICHAEL. *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 432 pp. £47.99 (cloth).

In many studies published in the area of early Christian language and literature, it seems less useful or attractive these days to analyze the theological component. While this is to some extent a correction of earlier scholarship, which often erred on the side of theological bias, condemning gnostics as heretics or too eagerly detecting traces of *Frühkatholizismus*, it would be a real loss, at least to me, when the theological framework that for many church fathers was so vigorously important would no longer feature in the analysis of their thought. Of course contemporary theology is not the same as patristic theology, and the historical study of theology is a rather different enterprise than actually doing theology. It is precisely the subtle understanding of such differences that underlies and informs Michael Cameron's study *Christ Meets Me Everywhere* and that makes it such a welcome contribution. Cameron's book seems to do almost everything right, and it does so, moreover, in what is at once a moderate and modest way, using what is both a humanistic and a humane style. While Cameron's goal is to highlight Augustine's exegesis, he does not thereby deplete it of its theological riches. He reticently employs literary theory but is careful always to stay close to his source, Augustine's early exegesis, and never adopts theoretical jargon. As a result, this is a sober and sobering book on early Christian exegesis in a wide religio-cultural sense, even if it puts the spotlight on Augustine's early figurative exegesis.

Cameron's choice to focus on Augustine's early figurative exegesis is a wise one. After the year 400 CE, when the book stops following Augustine, the consequences and ramifications of the Donatist and Pelagian controversies overshadow both Augustine's works and his reputation, impacting especially his intellectual legacy; this makes the study of the late Augustine a quagmire of sorts. Following a little under fifteen years of Augustine's early career, Cameron has divided his study into three parts, each of which marks a distinct period of his career. Part 1 deals with Augustine as novice, under which rubric Cameron groups his roles as rhetor, convert, and seeker of wisdom (386–91 CE). In part 2 the focus shifts to Augustine the journeyman, under which rubric we find him as priest, apprentice, and student of Paul in the years 391–96 CE. Finally, part 3 shows him as master, when he acts and serves as teacher, defender, and pastor of souls in the years 396–ca. 400 CE. Giving us a kind of intellectual biography of Augustine through a focus on his different roles allows the author to showcase Augustine's exegesis as the scriptural breath that Augustine inhales rather than as the breeding ground for normative (read suppressive) dogmas. The attempt to recreate the intellectual paradigm of the early Augustine as exegetical, and to do so in a highly flexible yet also carefully precise manner, is the great achievement of Cameron's study.

Part 1 is the most extensive, as its four chapters are spread out over 130 of the book's 280 pages. In chapter 4, entitled "Christ the Glue of Scriptural Unity," Cameron gives us the underpinnings of the book's overall title, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*. Introducing what is to come, he states on page 96: "The next chapter will pro-

pose the thesis that as the years passed Augustine more and more clearly articulated the person and work of Christ as central to a complete understanding of how to read Scripture in general and the Old Testament in particular." Here we also hit upon the transition from part 1, when Augustine under Ambrose's influence started to inhale Scripture and exhale exegesis, so to speak, to parts 2 and 3, which show us the fault lines that will separate Augustine's exegetical exhalations from those of some of his peers. Yet underlying these fault lines christology remains more a motif, or as Cameron states in italics on page 12 "*a way of seeing*," for Augustine than a dogma.

The fact that Cameron follows a linear historical trajectory creates a pleasant narrative tone that makes this study a delight to read, with wonderfully light stylistic flourishes (for example, calling Augustine the Babe Ruth of ancient Latin Christian theology, striking out a lot but with mammoth home runs as well [15]) but with the narrative always remaining on point even if filled with details. The wealth of material presented—biographical, historical, exegetical, rhetorical—also ensures that neophytes and experts in Augustinian studies are brought up to the same level, thus lending more authority to the voice of the author as he unfolds his thesis.

Cameron's thesis is to see the christological motif as central to Augustine's early exegesis, which is called "figurative" (16–18) because it dynamically unites the literal and the spiritual. To make his case he has to analyze the relationship between the Old and New Testaments in Augustine, which is an area of fertile scholarship (see, e.g., Paula Fredriksen's *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010]). Where Fredriksen commends Augustine for what she calls a defense of historical Judaism in his debate with Faustus, even if elsewhere he can be as anti-Jewish as his peers, Cameron comes to a more complex but, in the long run, perhaps more rewarding interpretation in chapter 8, subtitled "Augustine Figures It Out," about the "Old Testament as the First Book of the New." By mining, like Fredriksen, Augustine's massive anti-Manichaean *Contra Faustum*, Cameron summarizes on page 259: "The thrust of Augustine's argument is that if Christian love or *caritas* is the true 'end' of Scripture interpretation, as *On Christian Teaching* asserted, then one finds the 'way' to *caritas* through the Christ-centered Old Testament exegesis." A key discussion follows on John 1:17 (260–63), which reads, "The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Against Faustus, Augustine does not hold that something was added to the Law but rather that Christ changed it (taken up in the epilogue in relation to the hermeneutical centrality of *transfigurare* for the readers of Scripture [290–92]) by doing it, or as Cameron puts it in italics: "For Augustine *Christ fulfilled the Law by making it grace and truth*" (262). This hard-won salvation-historical insight came slow to Augustine, but, as Cameron shows, it also makes his exegesis the rich tapestry that has come down to us, with a christology soaked deep into the bones (281; *Faust* 12.27).

WILLEMEN OTTEN, *University of Chicago*.

HAMPSON, DAPHNE. *Kierkegaard: Exposition and Critique*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. xiv+344 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

This book is intended as a guide to the novice, situating Kierkegaard in his intellectual-historical context and expounding texts central to the authorship. Each chapter addresses a specific work and consists of an introduction, exposition of main points, and critical analysis. The book begins with an overview of Kierkegaard's intellectual milieu and concludes with a critical appraisal of his authorship. Though its introductory and expository elements are written with the novice in mind, they are not without interest to the scholar. Moreover, inasmuch as one of the author's great

strengths is her expertise in Lutheran theology, the book possesses value for the specialist who may not know how deeply that tradition has informed Kierkegaard's thought. The work is substantive without being pedantic and does an admirable job of reaching both audiences for which it was intended.

Though theologically trained herself, Hampson makes it clear that her indebtedness to Kierkegaard consists in his having "set before me the implications of Christian claims and . . . enabled me to understand with greater clarity why I should not wish to be Christian" (vi). Her central claim is that Kierkegaard was a modern man who saw "clearly the challenges that Christianity was up against" (3), yet being "radically conservative," was committed to defending Chalcedon. To that end he drew on "the intrinsic existentialism of his Lutheran heritage" (5), invoking faith as a *sacrificium intellectus* in relation to the paradox of the God-man. The attempt was praiseworthy for its honesty that the doctrine of Christ's two natures lies at the heart of Christianity. Yet it could not but fail, so contrary is that dogma to modern assumptions: "Kierkegaard sees with perhaps the greater clarity [than Schleiermacher and others of the period] that Christianity can only be believed in stark contradiction to the epistemology or ethics of the modern world" (294).

It is in her treatment of *Philosophical Fragments* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985) that Hampson addresses most extensively the reasons for that failure. One is that Kierkegaard "did not really want to come to terms" with the revolution in biblical criticism that was occurring in his day and, as a consequence, held "a fairly literal view of the biblical text, supposing it to be historically accurate in a way that few . . . could hold today" (86). Hampson makes much of the fact that "astonishingly there is no evidence that he either owned or read [David] Strauss's famous book [*Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: C. F. Oslander, 1835–36)]" (86). This may be so, though its equally polemical sequel—*Die christliche Glaubenslehre* (2 vols. [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1840–41]) in Danish translation (*Fremstilling af den christelige Troeslære* [Copenhagen, 1842–43])—was among the books auctioned from Kierkegaard's library after his death. While Kierkegaard did eschew inquiry into the gospels' historicity, it does not follow that "he did not want to face" that "this paradox [the God-man] was constructed within history and thus of human making" (166). Rather, he held that any purely scientific consideration of Christianity, whether yielding results pro or contra, requires a suspension of judgment that is the very antithesis of faith.

Other reasons cited for the failure of Kierkegaard's attempt to rehabilitate Chalcedon are philosophical in nature. Its success depends on the tenability of the transcendent manifesting itself via paradox. Hampson's position is that if there is such a thing as the transcendent, we could never know it. "To conclude that, beyond the boundary to what we can know (which Kant delineated) there lies an 'unknown', then furthermore hypostasizing it (making of it a something, God), has to be a category mistake" (98). This strikes me as an egregious misconstrual of Kierkegaard's intent, which is to identify transcendence as a necessary qualification of deity. That he is not deriving God's existence from a limit to our knowing is clear—in the very place in which the alleged hypostatization occurs, Kierkegaard states that existence-proofs invariably establish their conclusions by circular reasoning. Can it really be that in a discussion of the circularity of such proofs Kierkegaard has himself offered one? Ironically, it is Hampson who has arrived at a preordained conclusion when she states that, faced with the "unthinkable" particularity of the eternal breaking into time, "one either takes the a priori position (as does the present author) that . . . there can be no such particularity. Or, despairingly, one lets go of reason in Kierkegaard's 'leap' of faith" (99–100). Her foreclosure of the very possibility of revelation smacks of dogmatic pronouncement, not argument.

Also enabling Kierkegaard's defense of the eternal entering time is his false metaphysic of becoming, which, we are told, erases the distinction between two fundamentally different kinds of change: the change of coming into existence versus that which occurs in already existing things. Kierkegaard designates as "belief" the capacity to ascertain both, effectively treating events in the causal nexus as a continuous coming into existence. He "thinks the world a kind of random place in which just about anything can happen, presumably because God is behind each individual action" (92). "If, for Kierkegaard, each happening comes from the hand of God . . . , there existing no ordered regularity, then it is not difficult to credit that there can be all sorts of one-off happenings which, one of a kind, form no part of a causal nexus" (95). Hampson contrasts Kierkegaard's "medieval" view of causality (317) with Hume's modern conviction about nature's regularity (93n.). Yet Hume himself denominates such conviction "belief," and one can easily argue that Kierkegaard gets his view of belief as the organ for the historical from Hume. Is Kierkegaard, then, a "medieval" in his thinking?

On balance, the background and expository portions of Hampson's work possess great value, situating Kierkegaard in his context and identifying important parallels to Luther—albeit noticeably failing to locate these in their shared *theologia crucis* framework. While her appreciation for both men is genuine, it calls to mind Erasmus's faint praise of Luther when, in a letter to Zwingli, he declared himself "already to have taught almost everything that Luther taught, with the exception of Luther's riddles and paradoxes"—to which J. G. Hamann rejoined that these paradoxes were what pleased him most (Fritz Blanke, "Hamann und Luther," in *Hamann-Studien*, Studien zur Dogmengeschichte und systematischen Theologie, vol. 10 [Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1956], 45).

CRAIG HINKSON, *Liberty University*.

HARPER, KYLE. *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*. Revealing Antiquity 20. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013. 304 pp. \$39.95 (cloth).

From Shame to Sin seeks to demonstrate a focused and ambitious thesis: Christianity made a profound, disruptive, and radical difference in the ancient Roman sexual economy. Following the introduction, the argument proceeds in four chapters. Framed around an analysis of Achilles Tatius's novel, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, as a paradigmatic source for Roman social mores, chapter 1 seeks to map the social-sexual landscape of the high Roman Empire. Here Kyle Harper covers familiar ground: a general acceptance of same-sex eros, as long as proper active and passive roles were maintained and freeborn boys were not penetrated; an emphasis on modesty for women and moderation for men; an increasing alignment of marriage and the erotic. Harper acknowledges the "gloomy" sexual restraint of the Stoics (11) but seeks to pull the pendulum back from reconstructions of ancient sexuality that give the philosophers pride of place. Rather, he uses the "uniformly smirking" references to philosophy in *Leucippe and Clitophon* to sideline the significance of Stoicism (71) and instead focuses, provocatively and relentlessly, on a different set of social factors: the ubiquity of sexually available bodies (i.e., slaves) for the well-off and, for the rest, the prostitution industry. Harper refuses to let his readers look away from the undeniable brutalities of this sexual economy. But he also sees it as part and parcel of a culture in which those at the top (such as Achilles Tatius) could "locate selfhood and salvation in the movement of erotic energy through the heated clay of the human body" (21). Against

Plato and the Stoics, Achilles “embraces the world . . . in which eros finds its natural place” (78).

Christianity changes all this—dramatically and decisively. On Harper’s reading, the much-vaunted similarities between the sexual ethics propounded by Roman philosophers and early Christians are entirely superficial. Instead, chapter 2 offers a very different vision of early Christian sources. Here Paul and Clement of Alexandria stand out. Paul extends the scope of the term *porneia* to cover male sexual indulgences traditionally considered harmless, such as visiting prostitutes and having sex with one’s slaves (the latter point Harper seems to infer, based on his overall sense of Paul’s thought). And the apostle also offers to history an “analogy between male and female same-sex attraction [that] was strikingly novel, and truly momentous” (95). Clement then builds on Paul’s thought to propound a “sexual ideology [that] is purely Christian again and again, Platonic concepts of appetite and Stoic attitudes toward desire are held responsible to the logic of Christian tradition” (108). This distinctively Christian logic is, for Harper, most visible in the denunciatory intertwining of male same-sex eros, prostitution, and the slave trade. In this chapter, Harper also rejects attributing Christian articulations of free will to Stoic influence and instead argues that early Christians were original and innovative theorists in their own right, offering “a radically new doctrine of human volition” (122) to answer the questions posed by philosophers and others.

Chapter 3 follows this trajectory into the period of Christianity as imperial religion. Here Harper is primarily interested in legal evidence regarding same-sex love, virginity, and marriage (though he also looks to Christian sources such as sermons) in order to trace the emergence, under Justinian, of “a wholly transformed legal order, fully consonant with Christian sexual ideology” (155). The chapter also notes a turn away from free will, by way of Augustine’s debates with his Pelagian opponents. Harper offers an innovative reading of the issue, emphasizing how notions of freedom in sexual matters were rendered more complicated by the realities of slavery and prostitution. Chapter 4 returns to the ancient romance. The chapter contends that the Christian reworking of the genre—and especially recasting its paradigmatic heroine as perpetual virgin or repentant prostitute—embodies the conclusive transformation from a fundamentally social logic of shame to a theologically driven logic of sin.

There is much to appreciate in this bold and wide-ranging book. *From Shame to Sin* is learned and well researched, and it synthesizes a broad range of primary materials, often in innovative ways. Harper’s persistent emphasis on the collision between early Christian commitments and the embodied realities of Roman slavery and prostitution yields new insights into the history of ancient sexuality, even if certain conclusions on this front remain speculative or tenuous. Still, the larger story that the book tells is basically a linear one, tracing a putatively singular worldview’s undeviating and unrelenting drive toward radical rupture. Harper is aware of the dangers of this approach, acknowledging that “any historian is unwise to bet against complexity, against the deeper continuities that abide beyond the reach of ecclesiastical power or prerogative” (189); yet, effectively, the book makes exactly this bet.

Put another way, “the focus is on the development of orthodox, Pauline sexuality, because it is the style of Christian thought that ultimately triumphed” (14). Such a claim begs many questions, insofar as the full theological, cosmological, and anthropological contours and nuances of an “orthodox, Pauline sexuality” have always been contested, from Paul’s earliest readers up until the present (and even among those Christians who have basically agreed about what people ought to do and not to do sexually with their bodies). Yet *From Shame to Sin* avoids such questions by reading theological texts primarily as sources for social history. This raises a methodological

question about the treatment of evidence—as when Harper dismisses primary material that might seem to complicate his radical transformation thesis as “the alarmist fables of monastic lore” (238). More important, however, this sort of approach to early Christians’ diverse, dazzlingly intricate, and often quite convoluted articulations of theological anthropology not only “[mutes] the competing noises in favor of the specific harmonies” (14) but also fails to explore or consider the degree to which these putative harmonies are themselves internally constituted by irreducible dissonances—and thus never asks what difference such aporias might make for the book’s stated goal: “a better understanding of the inheritance fate has delivered to us” (244).

BENJAMIN H. DUNNING, *Fordham University*.

TENNANT, BOB. *Corporate Holiness: Pulpit Preaching and the Church of England Missionary Societies, 1760–1870*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. xii+342 pp. \$99.00 (cloth).

The field of sermon studies is a new and expanding area of research in the modern history of Christianity, particularly of Anglicanism. Hitherto its exponents have confined themselves strictly to metropolitan interests, but Bob Tennant has now brought this emerging discipline into engagement with a very different piece of historiographical territory—the study of missionary societies and their ambiguous place in the history of popular imperialism. The resulting book is a strange mixture. It is grounded in an impressively exhaustive survey of sermons preached at the anniversaries of the three Anglican societies: the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK, established in 1698–99), the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG; 1701), and the Church Missionary Society (CMS; 1799). Historians who want to know who preached for which society in a particular year, how many of the preachers were bishops, and what patterns of selection of biblical texts can be traced over time, will find Tennant’s tables and appendices a rich mine of information. The range of statistics extends further still, to painstaking tabulations of episcopal attendance at meetings of the SPG Board, revealing comparisons of SPG’s and CMS’s income and expenditure, and tallies of attendance at Annual General Meetings of the CMS during its first two decades (shown to be surprisingly small). The book is thus considerably more than a textual analysis of missionary-related Anglican sermons and, in fact, becomes an interpretation of the contrasting and changing styles of governance of the three societies.

Tennant’s sympathies lie with those Anglican historians such as Rowan Strong who have sought to rehabilitate the two eighteenth-century Anglican societies, notably the SPG, from evangelical accusations that they were never real missionary societies and were concerned mainly with ministry to settlers in the British colonies. He is impressed with the sober and stately nature of the SPG’s episcopal governance, claiming that “the Society’s very cumbersomeness ensured that the Church itself, and especially the bishops, gradually became missions-minded” (36). Such an optimistic conclusion is undermined by Tennant’s own observation that the SPG was able to recruit “only if the rewards were commensurate with the decent livings obtainable by clergy in England and by educated men in the colonies” (42). Tennant also argues in a rather elitist vein that the judicious and rational theology of the episcopally led SPG effectively insulated it against the popular lay imperialism to which the CMS succumbed: SPG preachers are described as “consistently anti-imperialist” (160), and we are informed that “the ‘system’ of colonialism” was an “irrelevant” concept to the SPG (187). Tennant has a point—the SPG’s original lack

of interest in “heathen” territory far beyond British dominions meant that in the early nineteenth century it was less likely than the CMS to call for British imperial intervention to serve missionary goals. Nevertheless, this is a strange verdict on a society whose royal charter committed it to the provision of Anglican ministry for British “Plantations, Colonies, and Factories beyond the seas” (30). In contrast, evangelical preachers for the CMS are described with manifest distaste as theologically “inactive” or “reductionist” (86), “innocent of theology,” or “narcissistic and masochistic” (240). The only evangelical to receive applause as “theologically mainstream” is the East India Company chaplain Henry Martyn, who is placed, quite wrongly, “in the SPCK/SPG orbit” and is said to have been adopted by the evangelicals only posthumously (143, 168). Henry Venn’s famous 1851 policy paper committing the CMS to the development of an indigenous pastorate is dismissed as a late conversion to a principle that the SPG had consistently espoused from its inception (246–47). Another nineteenth-century missionary innovation—the idea of the missionary bishop—Tennant claims to have discovered in a 1784 sermon before the SPCK by William Vincent (83).

These questionable judgments arise from a lack of grounding in modern scholarship on the history of the missionary movement and from a persistent tendency to assume too readily that statements in anniversary sermons may be adduced as evidence of formative influences on society policy. This is a pity, for there are valuable insights and emphases in this book. The extraordinary fragility of the CMS in its first two decades is clearly exposed. Tennant shows convincingly that the importance of the anniversary sermon to the societies declined over time as they became more dependent on lay energies in the organization of the voluntary support that was their lifeblood. In the CMS, the roles that leading evangelical clergy and founder members of the society played as anniversary preachers diminished as policy-making initiative shifted to lay-dominated specialist committees and the secretaries who serviced them. The SPG lost much of its distinctiveness from the 1830s once it could no longer depend on the financial support of the British state and was compelled to enter the marketplace of popular philanthropy. In so doing, it became more open to imperial sentiment.

There are a number of unfortunate errors. The *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (IBMR) is rendered as *The International Bulletin of Missionary Studies*, with the corresponding unrecognizable abbreviation of IBMS. The India missionary W. T. Ringeltaube appears as Rigeltaube (79), and the historian Bruce Hindmarsh as Hindmarch (115 n. 93). An article in the IBMR by Thomas A. Askew is wrongly attributed to Eric J. Sharpe, misspelled as Sharp (256 n. 3, and 323). Baptist Wriothsesley Noel, born in 1798, is described as a founder of the British and Foreign Bible Society, founded in 1804 (240). The word “episcopacy” is consistently used when “episcopate” is meant. There is also potential for misleading anachronism in that the term “missiology,” coined as recently as 1915 by the Dutch Catholic Ludwig J. van Rijkceversel, is consistently applied to the theology undergirding the missionary sermons of the eighteenth-century Church of England.

BRIAN STANLEY, *University of Edinburgh*.

TURNER, DENYS. *Thomas Aquinas: A Portrait*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013. 312 pp. \$28.00 (cloth).

Adding another book to the near infinite outpouring of works on Aquinas requires chutzpah, as theological industry has produced more only on Augustine than it has

on Aquinas. Writing on Aquinas is also more difficult than on Augustine, as Christianity, or rather the discipline of Christian theology, is somewhat divided over Aquinas's contribution. Whereas Augustine may put one in tension with the Eastern tradition as far as his reading of the Trinity is concerned, he unites Western Christianity, which has since collectively tried its hand at the interpretation of his oeuvre. This is not the case with Aquinas (1225–74 CE), whose reception has caused confessional division.

Some division surrounded Aquinas already at the start of his career. Against the wishes of his family, who wanted him to become a Benedictine abbot, he joined the Dominicans instead, a new order not in the same league of social entitlement. Trained by Albert the Great at the *studium generale* in Cologne as well as at the University of Paris, Thomas taught in Paris and later went to Naples to organize a Dominican house of studies. His output was voluminous, with his biggest effort no doubt the *Summa Theologiae*. After a mysterious breakdown, he died in 1274 CE, not quite 50 years old, having become injured on his way to the second council of Lyon. If his life and output seem remarkably focused compared to Augustine (teaching university theology and writing the *Summa*), the serenity of both are misleading in light of the major changes they reflect. As a scholastic theologian, Thomas not only followed the methods of the new universities, embracing the influence of Aristotle in the process, but he changed the face of theology in turning it from a monastic/spiritual enterprise into a science that had its place among the other medieval sciences, being labeled the *regina scientiarum*. While controversy and condemnation (1277 CE) surrounded the entrance of Aristotle in academic theology, Aristotelian thought soon undergirded the new scholasticism of Thomas and others, replacing the more exegetical but also worn spirituality of prior tradition. Division surrounded Thomas again after Pius IX declared theology the proper Catholic response to the Enlightenment at the First Vatican Council, not coincidentally touched on in another monograph by Turner (*Faith, Reason and the Existence of God* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004]), and, according to chapter 4 on God (100–144), it did so again in the twentieth century, with Karl Barth and Karl Rahner labeling Thomas's *Summa* a religion-neutral work lacking the passion of the great christologies.

Given that Turner is best known for his works on or related to mysticism (*Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], *Eros and Allegory: Medieval Exegesis of the Song of Songs* [Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1995], and *Julian of Norwich, Theologian* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011]), the turn to Thomas stands out in his oeuvre. Yet to the extent that his works on mysticism often emphasize mysticism's rationality, even if an apophatic one at that (cf. the fiercely rational, anti-experiential mysticism ascribed to Eckhart in *Darkness of God*), his analysis of Thomas's rationality, which can often come across as sterile, conversely emphasizes its passionate underpinnings rooted in divine love, grace, and friendship. It does so in a way that does justice to Thomas and yet is in full continuity with his earlier work. While it is not easy to sell Thomas to a larger audience, Turner succeeds in doing so by being informative and clear in a down-to-earth style as well as keeping a loyal focus on Thomas's Dominican motto *contemplata aliis tradere*, that is, to transmit to others what has been contemplated, in which mysticism (*contemplata*) and pedagogy (*aliis tradere*) are subtly combined.

In chapter 4 on God, Turner defends Thomas against those who fault him for being religion-neutral by stressing that the pedagogical order of the *Summa* does not reflect theological weight. Rather than seeing Aquinas as a rational foundationalist, Turner widens the circle by foregrounding Thomas's religious ecumenism, as Christianity shares the divine oneness with Judaism and Islam (115), about which the five ways make arguments even understandable to pagans and outclassing the contempo-

rary atheist arguments by Dennett and Dawkins (112). This leaves the Trinitarian faith as distinctively Christian.

By adding in the comparison with Islam, Turner can introduce valuable historical background and enrich the pluralist tapestry of the *Summa*'s theological project beyond its Aristotelian nature. This is important insofar as Thomas tends to lack profile, disappearing behind his massive work. While it may strike readers as odd that Turner calls Aquinas a materialist in chapter 2 (47–69), it helps him to illustrate that for Thomas, in contradistinction to Bonaventure and Descartes, we know both God and the self from the standpoint of the world (36). Yet what distinguishes the *Summa* as a theological work is that it analyzes the truths of faith under the aspect of God, who is hence its formal, even if not its material, object (100–101). God is therefore treated before the Trinity and Christ, who follows only in the third part. In chapter 7 on Christ (189–229) Turner begins with Thomas's debate over the eternity of the world, which against John Pecham, he saw as a scientific possibility but not the actual truth. The reason, Turner argues, was not a blind defense of Aristotle but a recognition that many revealed truths of Christianity are contingent: from the creation of the world to its sinful state. And yet, for Thomas theology is a *scientia* and a *disciplina*. For Thomas, God is *maxime liberalis*, preferring mercy to justice in such a way that what appears contingent to humanity is foreknown and predestined by his logic of *convenientia*, translated as convenient, skillful, and "behovely" (per Julian of Norwich). Against Anselm of Canterbury, who here as in chapter 4 bears the brunt of Turner's critique, Thomas does not see the incarnation as necessary in the sense of a predictable truth (which overlooks Anselm's careful distinction between *necessitas precedens et sequens*, as he makes the latter claim only) but as "being exactly right, perfectly judged" (209) from a God who is *maxime liberalis*. Here Turner is at his best, linking Thomistic rationality with Dionysian excess, and with Eckhart's later mystical *bullitio* and *ebullitio* (seething and boiling), resulting in his elegant christological conclusion that by restoring the wholeness of the *imago dei*, Christ's humanity reveals his nature as *verus deus* while his poverty, linked to Thomas as a mendicant, reveals Christ's humanity as *verus homo* (229).

WILLEMEN OTTEN, *University of Chicago*.

BEDUHN, JASON DAVID. *Augustine's Manichean Dilemma*. Vol. 2, *Making a "Catholic" Self*, 388–401 C.E. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. 552 pp. \$79.95 (cloth).

Manicheanism has arisen in several centuries and various cultures. In the fourth and fifth centuries, it spread from the Fertile Crescent across North Africa and was effectively staunch by the writing, preaching, and teaching of Augustine of Hippo. In the tenth century, it reared its head in the Balkans among the Bogomils but was for the most part eliminated by Manichean conversion to Islam. In the thirteenth century, Manicheanism arose again in Spain, this time under the name of Albighensianism, but was successfully restrained by *Summa contra Gentiles* of Thomas Aquinas, drawing principally from Augustine's anti-Manichean works. It is therefore unlikely to see Manichean metaphysical dualism alive, though not particularly well, in the twenty-first century in the person of Jason David BeDuhn, professor of religious studies at Northern Arizona University.

During his own lifetime Augustine was often accused of Manicheanism. Such an accusation may have been involved in Megalios's delay in approving Augustine's episcopal ordination in 396. The Donatists accused Augustine of Manicheanism, undoubt-

edly on the grounds that he left Africa a Manichean in 383 and returned there from Milan in 388 a suspect Christian with Neoplatonic overtones. During the final phases of the anti-Pelagian crisis, Julian of Eclanum accused Catholics in general, and Augustine in particular, of Manicheanism because they maintained the doctrine of original sin. Now BeDuhn revives this ever-recurrent accusation.

This book is the second volume of a larger work and covers the years 388–97, from Augustine's return to Africa until his episcopal ordination. It is a thesis book. Put succinctly, BeDuhn's thesis is that Manicheanism not only forms the background against which some of Augustine's thought is formulated (a generally recognized thesis) but is many times an integral part of Augustine's own conceptualization of Christianity. His mentor in this endeavor is the late Kevin Coyle. BeDuhn at times tempers the full weight of his assertion, as indeed he must, but its presence lies behind almost every page.

Truth to tell, the author at times presents his thesis rather well. His method is to mine Augustine's works in chronological order for evidence of Manicheanism. He summarizes Augustine's arguments. Sometimes he attempts to show their weaknesses and supports the contrary Manichean theses. At other times, he tries to show the ultimate Manicheanism of Augustine's own thought. In the latter instance, his method for the most part is not philological but thematic. He attempts to show thematic similarity between Augustine and Manicheanism, most times without tying such similarity to particular Manichean texts. During the course of the work, at times he realizes the weakness of this method and seeks to soften the results of its overuse. In the course of his work, BeDuhn tends to accept the theses of secondary literature at face value without further critique. His exaggeration in finding Manicheanism behind almost every turn of phrase in Augustine weakens his thesis. On the contrary, in the usual case Augustine intends to use his transformative understanding of Porphyry and Plotinus to refute Manicheanism.

Practically every page of the body of this book is provocative. As such, page by page, line by line, examination of BeDuhn's arguments would be as useless as it is unnecessary. However, a few comments on his methodology, presuppositions, and general themes would be in order.

As a methodology, mere thematic similarity has severe limitations. It tends to be supported by the discovery of similar terminology, but such similarity does not prove dependence. The image of light, for example, could derive from several places—Neoplatonism, the Bible, or Manicheanism, or perhaps all three. Food imagery could find its basis in the Bible or common social life. Search for a universal way of salvation could be biblical, Porphyrian, or Manichean. Philological analysis of some sort or other is necessary to establish BeDuhn's theses. Without such analysis we have, as in this case, theories on dependence run rampant. Herein lies a further difficulty for BeDuhn. Augustine would have read Manichean works in Latin. What would these translations look like? Augustine would have discussed Manicheanism with his friends orally. Reconstruction of such conversations is well nigh impossible.

The author tends to think of Manicheanism as a well-developed, monolithic, and consistent system of thought. Is this true? Was Manicheanism in Carthage identical to Manicheanism in Hippo? In Rome? In Milan? More likely, a certain set of core doctrines existed and were then expounded with wide differentiation of further exposition by author and locale. The same is true of what the author terms Nicene (read Catholic) Christianity. Was not much of orthodox Christian doctrine still in the formative stage during the fourth century, as Augustine himself allows throughout *Confessions*? Did not Augustine himself contribute mightily to the establishment of orthodoxy?

BeDuhn's assertion that prior texts cannot be interpreted in light of later ones has been thoroughly discussed in the late 1960s and found wanting. It presumes that the first time an author wrote about a subject is the first time he thought about it. This is patently untrue. There could be several reasons why an author does not explicate a topic fully in one's writing. Lack of time or space might be one reason. Or might it not be the case that Augustine would have reserve about mentioning Porphyry's role in his conversion to Christianity because of Porphyry's stark and explicit anti-Christian polemic? Might mention of Porphyry inhibit acceptance of his project to use Porphyry (and Plotinus) to refute Manicheanism?

BeDuhn's treatment of *Confessions* is thesis oriented. No doubt Augustine's anti-Manicheanism is present behind some of *Confessions*. Foremost among the background Manichean teachings is their criticism of Genesis as presenting an anthropomorphic picture of God. These critiques no doubt stand behind Augustine's treatment of the Trinity in *Confessions* 11–13. However, it is pure speculation to see as part of *Confessions* a possible written defense by Augustine at a Numidian council to judge his suitability for consecration as bishop in the face of supposed Manicheanism. Anti-Manicheanism aside, other foundational considerations abound in *Confessions*. Primary among them is the *miseria* of man and the *miser cordia* of God. Augustine interprets his own life in light of his recent understanding of the pervasiveness of divine grace in human activity, based upon his transformative exegesis of Rom. 9:9–29 in *Ad Simplicianum*.

Much more could be said in appraisal of this work, but limitations of space preclude further examination. Undoubtedly BeDuhn's book will spawn other more incisive studies of the relation of Manicheanism to Augustine's mature thought. As more authentic Manichean texts are discovered and the variations of doctrine discerned, a more accurate picture of Augustine's relation to it may well emerge. However, BeDuhn's exaggerated presentation of his thesis limits the usefulness of this work in furtherance of Augustine scholarship.

FREDERICK VAN FLETEREN, *LaSalle University*.

CARTIER, MARIE. *Baby, You Are My Religion: Women, Gay Bars, and Theology Before Stonewall*. Gender, Theology and Spirituality. Durham, UK: Acumen, 2013. xii+256 pp. \$90.00 (cloth); \$29.95 (paper).

Marie Cartier gathers valuable untold stories from midcentury butch-femme bar culture in the United States, but her constructive use of those stories leaves much to be desired. During the years 1945–75, Cartier argues that the gay bar was the only physical space inside which gay women could exist and be recognized as gay. The gay bar thus provided gay women, otherwise stigmatized as sinners, with the satisfaction of what Cartier, following Sheldon Sheldrake (*Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001]), identifies as universal human needs for “community, affirmation of people's sacredness, and human capacity for transcendence” (31–32). These needs, Cartier assumes, are normally met by religion; for these gay women, however, only the gay bar served those needs. Thus, the gay bar served as sacred space.

Cartier's argument lays itself open to critique on a number of levels, both as a theological argument and as a contribution to religious studies. Cartier's definition of religion is substantively undefended, yet even in what is intended as a generic category of religion, Cartier interprets the bar space in terms of baptism, Eucharist,

ecclesiology, and salvation. Cartier recognizes that the women she interviewed did not understand either themselves or the bar in the ways that Cartier does. Nonetheless, she wants to create a way of interpreting midcentury butch-femme bar experience religiously and theologically, or as she puts it, “theologically” (195). The question is why. What is at stake? Early on, Cartier makes the dubious but interesting claim that “[g]ay women’s . . . bar culture is worthy of theological consideration on the grounds that sexual ethics reform might start with lessons from communities who defined themselves through sexuality even to the point that they were ostracized” (30), but the point never comes up again. Ultimately, the “theology” (195–96) that Cartier offers is about relationality, self- and other-love, and affirmation of the history of gay women’s bar culture. It is clear that this affirmation drives the rest of the argument; the specifically theological or religious aspect is circular as well as dependent on the prior decision not just to value bar culture but to value it as sacred.

As ethnography, or better, as a version of oral history, the book gathers fascinating material. The three vignettes that captivate Cartier to such an extent that they are repeated over and over in the book are compelling. In the first, a gay woman in a straight marriage calls gay women’s bars in the middle of the night and stays on the phone without saying anything. She is thus reassured that the bar is still there, that the world for which she longs (and that she left for the sake of children) still exists. In the second, an informant asserts that there were two ways of finding a gay women’s bar during this period: ask a taxi driver or follow a butch, thus lending support to the notion that butch women bore a heavy and essential burden for gay visibility (and thus community). The third, the motto of the book, is the simple assertion that the gay bar was “the only place” (1). While these stories are significant for histories of sex, gender, and sexuality, more sophisticated work would need to be done to read gay women’s bar culture as religious in convincing ways.

The book would have benefited greatly from more editing and a more careful selection of sources (e.g., avoiding user reviews from Amazon.com), particularly in the second half. As it is, there are too many shortcuts, overgeneralizations, and inconsistencies to make the book useful to the scholar.

LINN MARIE TONSTAD, *Yale Divinity School*.

CHARLTON, JAMES. *Non-dualism in Eckhart, Julian of Norwich and Traherne: A Theopoetic Reflection*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013. 192 pp. \$120.00 (cloth).

James Charlton’s work contributes to the growing body of literature identifying not as theological but theopoetic, meaning those explorations that turn to imagination, evocation, away from proof and proposition. The book reflects upon what Charlton sees as a kind of thread of nondualism running through a Christian tradition he argues has been historically and is currently dominated by (although, he acknowledges, certainly not comprehensively) firm distinctions between the transcendent and immanent, soul and body, logos and imagination, time and eternity. He considers Meister Eckhart, Julian of Norwich, and Thomas Traherne alongside Ramana Maharshi, the twentieth-century guru and exponent of Advaita Vedanta, finding points of congruence even as he notes they are not metaphysically commensurate (3). Charlton experiments with the essay form, interspersing exposition of his subjects with his own poems.

Two concerns motivate the book’s content and form. First, Charlton wants to articulate a spirituality in which thought and feeling, experience and theology, ethics and imagination, are joined. Charlton finds precedence for such a spirituality in the

“moderate non-dualism” (93) of the three Christian thinkers, in whom he finds a raveling of divine and human, for each “inscribed the reduction of boundaries between the divine and the human and between what is ‘you’ and what is ‘me’” without denying divine difference (148). Second, through the dialogue between prose and poetry, including his own poetic responses to his subjects’ work, Charlton seeks to incite in his readers an understanding that is affective, not merely intellective, of divinity inseparable from immanent experience. Such understanding he distinguishes from the aim of “impart[ing] cognitive sophistication” through argument and propositional statements (149).

In endeavoring to do theology in a performative mode, Charlton’s book can be placed in a community of authors that includes poets Anne Carson and Jan Zwicky, whose essays and poetry ventriloquize historical figures, placing ancient and contemporary thought in dialogue with each other and embedding philosophical and theological argument within fictional and autobiographical narratives. For Zwicky (see, e.g., *Lyric Philosophy* [Alberta: Brush, 1992] and *Wisdom & Metaphor* [Nova Scotia: Gas-pereau, 2003]), content and form are inseparable. Her texts are studies in polyphony, placing her own words on a page facing excerpts of philosophical texts, images, or musical scores that offer counterpoint and dissonance. These poet-essayists have complements in traditional theological studies in which there has been a recognition of the many forms theology takes and the importance of form to content. For example, Charles Stang argues that pseudonymity in Dionysius is both a formal strategy and an ascetic act (*Apophasis and Pseudonymity in Dionysius the Areopagite: “No Longer I”* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012]).

Unlike Zwicky, however, Charlton’s intertextual conversation does not seek to draw out tensions between each of his figures or between his own work and these authors, but to create a web of “consonance” (93) that overrides the historical and generic particularity of each author. This attention to similarities reflects his understanding of nonduality as “non-separation” (150). He presents each of the authors, and his own poetic voice, as fundamentally united in their vision of a world that exists through participation in a common transcendent reality.

Because of this dominant interest in demonstrating continuities, the place of difference in Charlton’s theology of nonduality remains a key question. While Charlton makes frequent reference to difference, he fails to sufficiently show differences between authors or discuss how each writer addresses difference (e.g., 91, 144, 146). Charlton is so concerned that attempts to “categorize” or offer logical analysis of his subjects will lead to “excessive dualism” (78) that his analysis suffers. He couches his arguments with helping terms like “perhaps” and “appears to be” and “tends to.” For example, when addressing Eckhart’s complex understanding of union and distinction, Charlton writes, “when Eckhart writes about union . . . he tends towards ambiguity and paradox. He does not deny the particularity of persons; neither does Julian nor Traherne. Perhaps they advance what today could be termed a biospiritual oneness, after the manner of the statement attributed to Jesus: ‘The Father and I are one’” (149). Although Charlton justifies such hedging language as a theopoetic demonstration of “provisional and exploratory” thought after the example of his three Christian subjects (152), the end result is the elision of subjects and an unwillingness to wager an argument. A pointed argument with clear distinctions would in fact throw similarities into relief and offer a more exciting, rich, and nuanced understanding of what Charlton means by nondualism, why it matters, and where it can be found in each writer. Lyricism and argument need not exist in opposition.

The same critique pertains to his treatment of Ramana. Although Charlton writes that he wants to avoid “vapid syncretism” (147), he sometimes glosses over incompatibilities between Eastern and Western metaphysics in his translation of his Euro-

pean subjects into Ramana's terms. Thus, he writes of Eckhart, Julian, and Traherne as perhaps "practitioners . . . of *abheda bhakti* (devotion without difference)" (151), for they believe that "at the absolute level of truth, that which might appear solid or personal is really transparent and impersonal . . . [a]rising from the pure Consciousness, the 'I Am' is expressive of the eternal, non-dual Self" (150). Lost in this discussion is acknowledgment of the Christian notion of the absolute as personal and embodied in a particular person, and the ways in which such particularity becomes the ground for creative tensions and multiple complex solutions in theological discourse.

Ironically, the notion of an "absolute level of truth" standing in opposition to what Charlton deems the illusions of the particular and the personal instantiates the very dualistic thinking that the author is at such pains to counter. Although he suggests that the two levels should exist in balance, he argues for the felicity of a mode of life that enacts these levels in a dualistic fashion: "At the level of relative or conventional truth, our phenomenal, functional selves continue, but they need to know and to experience that they are not substantially real" (150). Such a view promises not the discovery of transcendence within immanence, but the erasure of immanence.

Helpfully, Charlton's own poetry runs counter to his argument for such a collapse. His poems meditate on the small particulars of everyday life, moments and things often held to be inconsequential like a tiger snake, a spider, to which he attends in order to show the divine light imbuing and holding each small thing, revealing the transcendence of immanence and the immanence of transcendence within the fragile and temporary. But the poems and the constructive theorization of the final chapters, where the distinction between absolute and relative truth is asserted, work against each other. Despite this, the work is a provocative experiment, and Charlton's inclusion of Traherne is especially unexpected and appreciated, as is his weaving together of theology and poetry.

RACHEL SMITH, *Villanova University*.

DREVER, MATTHEW. *Image, Identity, and the Forming of the Augustinian Soul*. AAR Academy Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. viii+275 pp. \$74.00 (cloth).

If Augustine has never been a proto-Cartesian introspectionist, looking to trade in material confusion for the limpid lucidity of a denatured mind, then he is also less likely a postmodern, somehow in the business of ending a metaphysics he was never in a position to anticipate. One of Matthew Drever's goals in his intellectually rich and rigorous study of Augustinian soul formation is to contest the modernist reading of Augustine, and he does this most ably in his patient reading of the intellectual formation of the triune soul in the latter books of Augustine's *De Trinitate*. The perfecting there of a once sin-contorted triunity—as self-understanding, self-recollection, and self-love—is, on Drever's reading, not an ode to the human mind's capacity for eventual self-regulation but a pivot toward the triune God. When the image of the triune God in us has become perfect, we turn to face forevermore our awe-inspiring dependence on divine life. When sin still clouds our mind's eye, we are apt to treat the play of self in games of mind and will as a closed circuit. The picture of perfectability here—as the endless articulation of a relationship—couldn't be further removed from the self-effacing deity of modernity, the one that mathematizes itself out of existence and cedes the old God-soul relationship to a single-minded intellect (the ideal reasoner). But of course the picture, being premodern (Patristic), is not antimodern, and we are left to wonder how Augustine may begin to shape, and not simply echo, a postmodern muse.

Drever is well aware of how two postmodern proclivities constrain appropriations of Augustine. One proclivity concerns the desired object of knowledge: here the rule is to favor unstable, complex, dynamic, and even incoherent structures of being over fixed and hierarchical alternatives. The other proclivity concerns the knowing subject: here favor subjectivities that are eclectic, uncentered, revisable, and even, in a certain sense, self-defeating. Postmodern dread of boredom, oppression, and rigor mortis helps to sustain two drearily familiar constructions of Augustine. There is first the ancient Platonist who disdains the flesh, sublimes spirit into vacuity, and embraces the ascetic ideal; then there is the proto-Cartesian, who, knowing his own mind rather too well, adds a dose of congenital narcissism to ascetic self-definition. Drever certainly believes that Augustine is still worth reading, that he is a source of insight and wisdom, but also that he isn't being read correctly insofar as he is being shoe-horned into these personae or their antitheses. So how does Drever propose to reform our postmodern prejudices and liberate us to engage less self-referentially with an ancient tongue of fire?

His basic strategy is to have us meditate carefully, over the course of sustained readings of *De Genesi ad litteram* and *De Trinitate*, on two evocative notions: *creatio ex (de) nihilo* and *imago Dei*. If we are willing to take up these notions as flexibly organizing concepts within a multifaceted and evolving theological vision, then we are likely to experience Augustine as just postmodern enough to relax our antimodern defenses, but not so postmodern as to lose his power to unsettle us.

Drever is very adept at describing the coiled spring that too often passes for Augustine's fixed posture. Witness this passage from chapter 5 of *Image, Identity, and the Forming of the Augustinian Soul*: "The *de nihilo* origin of creation generates an irreducible mutability that precludes the self-referential nature of the mind from finding a final grounding within the autonomy of its own substance, and in this points ultimately to its grounding in the divine image and so to our orientation toward God rather than our origins *de nihilo*. This leads to a complicated dynamic between the stability of having a capacity as the image of the immutable God and the mutability of having our origin *de nihilo*" (120).

The dynamic Drever identifies is indeed complex. He has already discussed prior to this passage (see esp. chap. 3, sec. 3) Augustine's frequent use of the phrase *de nihilo* in place of *ex nihilo*. Although the phrases can be used interchangeably, and Augustine does sometimes use them that way, *de nihilo* has a connotation in his usage that *ex nihilo* is less likely to pick up. If my being is *ex nihilo*, then it is possible that I am altogether out of the nothingness (thank God) that renders my very being unstable, as tending toward the void. If my being is *de nihilo*, I am more likely to be still liable to game-changing mutability (and so I wait in hope). In his readings of Augustine, Drever tends to tuck mutability within creaturely identity. It is not really the sort of thing we can intelligibly transcend. Even were we all conformed at the end of things to a life more angelic than human, we would not cease to be creatures: we are *de nihilo*, not *de Deo*. "Humans find their fulfillment but not their origins," writes Drever, "in God" (120). Note the implication of this. If we are taking not-God (nothingness) into our being, then whatever image we are of God, we are also not that. God's perfectly triune condition of self-relating never fully translates into human terms. That seems to make origination *de nihilo* into something like an irreducibly chaotic remainder, fatal to a perfectionist logos but music to a postmodern muse.

But Drever's Augustine, whose love is not essentially for temporal things, is not prepared to sanctify imperfection. He holds out, in eschatological longing, for the perfection of creation as such, as *de nihilo*. The resolution hoped for here, if it can be rendered intelligible, follows a Christological logic: "The emptying of the Son refers to the assumption and perfection of the mutability of creation in the human

nature of Christ and a corresponding deferring of the instability associated with this mutability by the immutable eternity of the divine Christ" (165). Here is a rabbit hole that few diehard postmoderns will wish to burrow down.

JAMES WETZEL, *Villanova University*.

HASKER, WILLIAM. *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God*. Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. 288 pp. \$99.00 (cloth).

The Analytic Theology series not only aims at utilizing "the tools and methods of contemporary analytic philosophy for the purposes of constructive Christian theology" but it also purports to attend to "the Christian tradition and development of doctrine" (inside jacket cover). As a first installment, William Hasker's study is admirable in its achievement of both of these aims. The volume is a welcome counterexample to the tired stereotypes of analytic theology as necessarily indifferent to history, unduly rigoristic, hostile to mystery, and insensitive to any goods beyond theoretical explanation. Hasker engages in some depth historical, textual, and hermeneutical considerations alongside philosophical concerns in order to address the problem of "threeness-in-oneness" (10) that confronts a Christian concept of God. While engaging in the formalistic analysis and sophisticated metaphysical speculation that one expects from an analytic philosopher, he regularly qualifies such formalisms by appealing to the interminable mysteriousness of the Trinity and the pragmatic significance of Trinitarian language as serving nontheoretical interests such as worship.

The argument of the book unfolds in three parts. The first draws from recent historical reconstructions of the fourth-century development of pro-Nicene theology in Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine. Here Hasker seeks to strain out what he regards as some of the unnecessary and unworkable philosophical precommitments of these thinkers (such as their commitment to divine simplicity, impassibility, and a metaphysics of participation) in order to distill some foundations of Nicene orthodoxy that ought to guide our contemporary formulation of God's threeness and oneness. The upshot of this section is that Gregory and Augustine were "pro-social Trinitarian" thinkers in holding that the threeness of God consists in three objectively "distinct centers of knowledge, will, love and action" (75), and that these three exist as one "concrete divine essence" (53)—one singular instance or "trope" of the property of deity. Each person belonging to that trope is distinguishable by two metaphysically necessary and eternal causal relations (emanations): the Son's begottenness from the Father, and the Spirit's procession from the Father (or the Father and the Son—Hasker wishes to remain neutral about the *filioque* controversy).

In part 2, Hasker rejects several recent formulations on the part of theologians and (mostly) analytic philosophers of religion, since each fails either to preserve the foundations established in part 1 or to demonstrate their coherence and compossibility. Karl Barth and Karl Rahner come out as unable to satisfy the real distinctions between the persons, while Jurgen Moltmann, John Zizioulas, and all of the analytic theologians and philosophers of religion—Brian Leftow, Peter van Inwagen, Michael Rea and Jeffrey Brouwer, William Lane Craig, Richard Swinburne and Keith Yandell—are criticized for the ways that their conception of the divine unity fails to count as genuinely monotheistic, whether because they entail tri-theism or because they omit or distort some other desideratum of the orthodox view (e.g., the relations of origin).

Hasker's own solution in part 3 draws on the notion of constitution, holding that the relation between the persons and the concrete instance of divinity is like the relation between a statue and the lump of bronze from which it is shaped. The fact

that the lump and the statue have different persistence conditions (melting it down destroys the statue, but not the lump) shows that the two are not identical, but there exists only one individual instance or trope of bronzeness here. Just as the statue and lump are distinct modes of being constituted by a single individual essence or trope, so too the Father, Son, and Spirit as distinct conscious agents are modes of being distinguishable from one another by the relations of origin but constituted by a single individual instance of divinity. While on this view it is not conceptually necessary to suppose that an instance of divinity—a god—is not tri-personal, Christians take it that the tri-personal God is metaphysically necessary (a fact not discernible merely by logical analysis of our concepts).

While Hasker's survey of contemporary options is exemplary for its clarity of exposition, and his own constructive solution to the threeness-in-oneness problem is in many ways convincing on its own, the structure of his argument leading up to it is extremely tendentious. Once we arrive at his constitutional model, it becomes clear that it was functioning all along as a criterion for his arguments in the first two parts. Thus, for example, one can justly complain about the seeming arbitrariness with which Hasker determines what of classical formulation belongs to the kernel of Nicene orthodoxy and what belongs to the husk of antiquated "Platonic" prejudice that can be discarded (57). (The emanationist doctrine of origins is retained, but simplicity, impassibility, and "participation" metaphysics are all removed? See chaps. 7–8.) Hasker's representation of the metaphysical frameworks undergirding classical theism as outmoded is especially surprising when one considers the recent revival of interest in a broadly Aristotelian metaphysics of powers, as well as the abiding defenders of various features of the classical picture among analytic Thomists such as Ed Feser or Eleonore Stump.

This style of breezy dismissal continues in part 2, where authors' views are too easily dismissed for failing to incorporate views that were in part 1 deemed "foundations" (7) for Nicene orthodoxy partly on the basis of their anticipated importance for his own preferred model. Many of the rival accounts thus receive clearly contrived criticisms that turn out to be contrived precisely in order to accentuate what he takes to be the virtues of his own model. All of this smells vaguely like question-begging, and it serves to create the illusion that Hasker has managed to preserve all of the inherent strengths of these ten models while leaving behind all of their inherent weaknesses, thereby realizing an ideal toward which they were all merely groping.

Questions also remain about Hasker's own model. Since his view ultimately entails that the persons are properties of the divine substance (188), we might wonder how we should interpret creedal affirmations that portray each person not merely as a property but rather as a property bearer. Moreover, he acknowledges that his account requires us to deny that the Triune Lord is a person, strictly speaking, and suggests instead that God can only by a "natural extension" be designated with personal pronouns such as "he" or (when referring to itself) "I" (150). Hasker does not offer any clear analysis of the logic or justification licensing such an extension. But even were he to provide one, he would still seem to be committing himself to the idea that the God of Christians is most fundamentally an impersonal being, a claim that surely runs counter to the understanding of many Christians, Gregory and Augustine not least among them.

SAMEER YADAV, *Westmont College*.

The Journal of Religion

ROSE, KENNETH. *Pluralism: The Future of Religion*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.
x+190 pp. \$110.00 (cloth).

In writing this clear and forceful volume, argued with a philosophical and religious fervor, Kenneth Rose is on a mission, marshaling support for his prophecy that pluralism is on its way to becoming the only intellectually coherent explanation of religious diversity. Indeed, the Copernican shift from inclusivism and exclusivism to pluralism—prophesied in our day by John Hick, in his *God and the Universe of Faiths* (London: MacMillan, 1973) and other works—is not a theory but a fact grounded in “the irrevocable law of change” (2), “a necessary principle of the theology of religions,” as fundamental as a grammatical rule (68).

Only those who misunderstand the obvious facts of reality or who cannot bear the consequences of clear thinking hold to other views. Exclusivism is already defeated; inclusivism is unviable but survives as a comfort and convenience to those still wishing for a world in which one religion is the measure of all others. But only by fabricating increasingly implausible excuses, complicated epicycles like those of anti-Copernican physicists and philosophers, does inclusivism cling to credibility. Never reticent, Rose lines up theologians according to the measure of their willingness to become pluralists. As he proposes in chapter 1, some have already crossed over: Roger Haight, S. Mark Heim, and Jeffery Long, even if there are still inconsistencies in their positions. Others, chapter 2 tells us, energetically but in vain hold out for Christ-centered alternatives: Gavin D’Costa and Rowan Williams, for instance. Still others have the spirituality right but without a candid admission that pluralism is the only proper companion to that spirituality: Catherine Cornille gets to the Rubicon but then pulls back; and while the late Wayne Teasdale is a visionary prophet of what he termed “interspirituality,” in the end he disappointingly insisted on the Christ-groundedness of the harmony of religions. Some know that inclusivism is a dead-end but have not yet consistently admitted this fact: Kenneth Cracknell and Keith Ward, for instance; included in this group, this reviewer is referred to a number of times as edging into an inclusive pluralism that rejects the epicycles of excuse and delay, practicing an “including” theology that in its openness to Hinduism is in fact incompatible with inclusivism. I am, that is, a pluralist who just won’t admit it. In contrast to all this dithering (critiqued and put to the side in chap. 3) stands apophatic pluralism, a departicularization according to which no one can say that their own or any other particular religion is superior or best. This position is in harmony with a philosophical history of religions that, among its many virtues, takes to heart the syncretism and tendency to the pluralist view intrinsic to all religions. Chapter 4 proposes apophatic pluralism, and chapters 5 and 6 illustrate it with respect to the Hindu and Christian traditions.

Those who don’t agree with Rose eventually will, he tells us, because they must. By the “parable of the prisoners,” told and explained in chapter 7, Rose aims to bring home the inevitable cognitive necessity of pluralism. He asks us to imagine that representatives of different religions are locked together in a cell. With nowhere to hide, over the days they are no longer able to evade conversation on the deepest religious issues. Differences are over time worn down, and in the end they all concede that there is no way of showing any religion to be superior to the others. Thus ends the theology of religions. While he gently respects the interim value of soft inclusivist strategies, in this book he hopes to speed up the inevitable by persuading readers to turn to pluralism sooner rather than later.

In support of this view, chapters 5 and 6 conscientiously offer detailed readings of some Upanisadic and New Testament texts. While admitting that no single message of pluralism appears in such scriptures, he argues that pluralistic tendencies

are evident and as such are indicative of the best energy of the various complicated texts. The Upanisads, despite inclusive passages, are famously most distinctive when affirming a truth beyond sectarianism. Even the Gospels and letters of St. Paul are at their best when gesturing toward apophatic pluralism, in realizing a Christ bound by no name, social and ritual practices, or limited theological definitions. These are but examples, since Rose seems ready to sift through any canon of scriptures to show that it is a mix of exclusive, inclusive, and pluralistic sentiments that in the end point toward pluralism. That the scriptures are complicated and possessed of multiple voices is nothing new, since theological exegetes have always struggled with the plurality of voices. Rose, however, is more daring in his claim that all such texts contain the seeds of the realization that no religion can be said to be better or truer than the others.

All this is interesting, and I recommend this passionate book as worthy reading for those interested in refreshing and intensifying the debate on the significance of our many religions. (As such, it deserves an affordable paperback edition.) But it falls short of the author's great hopes. First, it is a philosopher's seemingly detached reading of texts that expect study within traditions. Rose has little to say about how those traditions have been read for millennia, and he turns too little and too late to the texts he exegetes and the theologies he criticizes, his mind apparently already made up before he reads the Upanisads or the New Testament. Believers have been educated over millennia to read their scriptures in particular ways and, by way of that education, to notice but not give uncontested primacy to pluralist and apophatic traces. The philosopher who steps outside those traditions makes a claim that, however cogent, ends up as a self-fulfilling prophecy quite distant from the issues facing those who stand within traditions, read with the tradition's masters and teachers, and accept revelation as a source of knowledge reaching beyond what appears most plausible to the philosopher. The texts are meant to educate, form, purify, and correct the reader, and turn consumers of data about religions into engaged participants in the work of articulating and living out radical truths within time and space, in communities of reflection and worship. Reading after scripture, being formed by it, and thinking within traditions of scriptural interpretation add up to a "second particularization" that runs contrary to Rose's departicularizing trend.

If inclusivism endures so stubbornly despite what Rose so easily sees as its obvious shortcomings, resistance to honest reasoning need not be the only explanation. It may be that inclusivist thinking actually is the viable alternative to apophatic pluralism, because it is a balance of particularity and universalism, a tension beyond or deeper than which there is not utterly simple viewpoint. Inclusivism, the including practice, allows the believer to affirm her own religion while yet saving a place for others. The best inclusivist instincts do not reduce to the trick of explaining away the other as merely an instance of what one already knows; they evince rather the determination to keep finding room for the other, but within the frame of the faith by which one already lives. This instinct toward spiritual and intellectual hospitality is not as implausible as Rose seems to think; it works.

History too may disappoint Rose. As Paul Knitter showed more than a decade ago in his *Introducing Theologies of Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), the exclusive, inclusive, and pluralist positions—plus a fourth "acceptance model"—are now more self-critical and complicated than before. Rose knows this, but he still risks oversimplification by insisting that pluralism will trump all other views, and the debate will—or has already—come to an end. It is more likely that all the positions will continue to test and challenge one another. We are not, after all, prisoners locked in a cell. At our best, we are neighbors free to listen, to come and go, little by little coming to think more openly than we did before we moved into the pluralist

neighborhood of our era. But still we go home again and worship in intense and all-encompassing ways that pass by the simple and cool solution of a philosophical pluralism.

FRANCIS X. CLOONEY, *Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University.*

GODFREY, JOSEPH J. *Trust of People, Words, and God: A Route for Philosophy of Religion.* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012. xviii+498 pp. \$49.00 (paper).

Joseph J. Godfrey distinguishes four dimensions of trust in this book. He then uses them to explore a variety of metaphysical, ethical, and epistemological issues related to religious trust and Christian faith. He does not present theological conclusions about God or human nature but rather “offers questions and suggestions for Christian theism, to theologians and others” (13, his italics). His method for avoiding theological conclusions is to focus on the subjective act of trust in general rather than the trustworthiness of any particular person or proposition. The resulting discussion is perceptive but very abstract.

Chapters 2 and 3 present Godfrey’s four dimensions of trust and compare them with the definitions of trust used by other authors. Reliance-trusting is letting another take care of something with the expectation of a good outcome and the risk of disappointment (30–31). I-thou trusting is seeking connection with another person for the sake of mutually rewarding relationship (39). Security trusting is acting in the confidence that “I belong, am accepted, am okay” (45). And openness trusting is “an orientation or disposition towards the whole world, a readiness to receive what [the] world has to give” (49). By trusting in these four ways, the subject creates the possibility of accessing four corresponding goods: “help, companionship, security, and understanding the way things are” (133). Godfrey concludes, therefore, that to trust is essentially “to be receptive to enhancement” (88). He rejects definitions that characterize trust as a type of belief rather than a type of action.

Chapter 4 argues for the commensurability of mundane and sacred trust by developing a theory of analogy and applying it to trust of God. Since trusting is a type of action, the relevant theory of analogy will concern actions rather than words, concepts, or things. Godfrey focuses on “somatic,” “craftbound,” and “recommendatory” analogies in asking whether trust of God (in each of his four dimensions) can be compared to trust of a human person (94).

Having presented his definitions and argued for their applicability to religious trust, Godfrey turns to the ethics of trust in chapter 5 and the relations between trusting and believing in chapter 6. Chapters 7 and 8, which examine the ontological assumptions underpinning his model of trust, did not seem well-integrated with the rest of the book. The style and content shift from analytic to phenomenological, and the primary conversation partners are Gabriel Marcel and Martin Buber. The two ontological “models” he presents (the “will-nature model” and the “intersubjective model”) do not play a significant role in subsequent chapters (224–29). Arguments that propose the existence of God as a necessary condition for (or, more modestly, the best explanation of) some types of human trust (of our cognitive faculties or of a self-revealing reality, or both) are the subjects of chapters 9 and 10. Chapter 11 argues that “trust is more central to religions than other dispositions are” (355). There is a great deal to say about these topics. Godfrey’s book is nearly 500 pages long, and he explores a number of tangents—both interpretive and constructive—along the way. I’ll simply note first that Godfrey’s analysis of belief as the trust of a proposition and truth as “trustworthiness” shares many of the strengths and weak-

nesses of pragmatist theories of belief and truth (200) and, second, that the discussion in chapter 10 could be fruitfully compared with Schubert Ogden's theistic argument from "existential faith" (*The Reality of God and Other Essays* [Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1992]).

Godfrey's treatment of his topic is deeply learned. He approaches nearly all of the questions in the book in conversation with other authors. This is both a strength and a weakness. He excels at synthesis, finding connections between social scientists, analytic philosophers, phenomenologists, and theologians who approach the concept of trust in different ways. However, Godfrey's voice is almost always filtered by his interpretations of a wide array of other works in a way that reduces the accessibility of the discussion. And when he interprets, he tends to seek charitable readings that will prove useful in his own treatments of trust. As a result his expositions of other positions are sometimes not clearly distinguished from his own insights. Godfrey's presentation of the "cosmofiducial arguments" of Richard Taylor and Hans Küng particularly illustrate this style of interpretation (269–306).

Godfrey's method and aims are descriptive rather than argumentative or normative. When he discusses the ethics of good and bad religious trust, for example, he catalogs the kinds of considerations that might be relevant to trusting God well or badly in each of the four ways he defines in chapter 2. He then recommends this description "to the religiously wise and to the religiously devout, to the theologian and to the mystic" who seek to reach concrete conclusions about these matters (393). The resulting modesty of intention is occasionally frustrating. After he defines four kinds of trust and argues for their commensurability with trust of God, the reader might expect him to use these definitions to reach argumentative conclusions. Instead, he writes, "I leave to others the argumentative and experiential approaches to the existence and character of God . . . I similarly leave to others probing the trustworthiness of people, of words, and of God" (395, his italics). My criticism therefore is that the book is encyclopedic in the sense that it offers definitions of trust, interpretations of existing literature on the subject, and explorations of related epistemological and psychological phenomena without conveying a clear sense of what's at stake in the effort. Encyclopedic books are undoubtedly useful, though, and patient readers will find here an insightful and comprehensive descriptive analysis.

RONNEY MOURAD, *Albion College*.

LOCKLIN, REID B. *Liturgy of Liberation: A Christian Commentary on Shankara's 'Upadeśasāhasrī'*. Christian Commentaries on Non-Christian Sacred Texts. Leuven: Peeters, 2011. xviii+327 pp. \$42.49 (paper).

There is a long history of Christian interest in Advaita Vedānta. One of the important players in the early history was the Baptist missionary, Alexander Duff, who discussed Hinduism in combative, warlike terms in *India and India Missions* (Edinburgh: Johnstone, 1839). He considered Advaita to be the key belief system of Hinduism, and in attacking it he believed he was attacking all of Hinduism—root and branch. With time, more positive approaches emerged. For instance, a century later Peter Johanns published *Vers le Christ par le Vedānta* (Louvain: Museum Lesianum, 1932). Rather than rejecting Vedānta out of hand he recognized and valued the similarities between various branches of Vedānta and the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. However, he treated Vedānta as primarily an intellectual system and argued that its intellectual flaws can be remedied by key concepts in Aquinas's philosophy. Later, Christians like Swami Abhishiktananda and Bede Griffiths engaged

more deeply with Advaita, considering it a profound mystical system and seeking to plunge into it.

Sixty years later, Francis Clooney's *Theology after Vedanta* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993) initiated an entirely different phase in the encounter between Advaita and Christianity. On the basis of the nature of the Advaitic commentarial tradition on the Upanishads, Clooney argued that one cannot easily make broad generalizations about Advaita and Christianity in a comparative perspective. Rather, one must treat these traditions as multifaceted and make careful and precise comparisons that are limited in scope. Clooney argued the point brilliantly, but one walks away from the book with very few comparative conclusions. One walks away instead with a knowledge of the difficulties inherent to comparative study.

Reid Locklin's *Liturgy of Liberation* inaugurates a further phase in the encounter between Christianity and Advaita. Clooney was Locklin's dissertation director years ago, and Locklin follows Clooney's methodology by giving a close, detailed examination of a Hindu text in comparison with Christian texts. However, whereas Clooney gave comparisons that were cautious and limited in scope, Locklin boldly ventures into a broad variety of comparisons. For instance, the second chapter compares how St. Paul coordinated Judaism and Christianity with how Shankara coordinated differing schools of Vedic exegesis. The third chapter compares St. Paul's declaration that the wisdom of the world is folly with Shankara's radical relativizing of personal identity. The fourth chapter compares the way Shankara believed the truth of the Upanishads are planted in the believer with the way St. Paul and St. Augustine believed the truth of the Bible is planted in the believer.

The study is rich, but the comparative topics have a somewhat scattered and random order and do not always build upon each other. Locklin is aware of this randomness and refers to the chapters as "fragments" (319). His goal in the final chapter is to pull these fragments together. The result is discussions of four further topics: (1) the issues of nature and grace, (2) conflicting truth claims, (3) apophaticism, and (4) human relations. All four discussions are intriguing, and this review will briefly cover the third discussion. Shankara's *Ātman* is, as is widely known, sharply distinguished "from phenomenal experience" (309). The Bible, on the other hand, depicts God as deeply involved with human affairs. Locklin points out that scholars have attempted to show that Shankara's thought and Christianity may not be as dissimilar on this point as it initially seems, but he also cautions that such approaches "risk softening and domesticating the radicality" of the *Upadeśasāhasrī*, a text meant to challenge an individual's sense of self-identity (311). Instead of taking the route mapped out by other scholars, Locklin suggests that Jesus's cry on the cross is an apophaticism that resonates with the *Upadeśasāhasrī*.

The reader may wish to see the broad range of points made in the earlier chapters drawn into a final, key point in the last chapter. However, in Locklin's own words, the final chapter consists of "fragments" that are "more comprehensive" than the fragments of the prior chapters (319). These further fragments do not cohere to give a final, definite point, but instead raise "questions for still deeper conversation" (*ibid.*). This may frustrate the reader, but the fragmentary character is appropriate for a comparative study that focuses on texts in detail. Christianity and Advaita are complex traditions that grew up independently of each other, so they do not line up neatly alongside each other for comparison. There are overlaps and resonances, but neither tradition conforms to the other, and thus the comparison does not always conform to the human expectation of order. The comparativist must explore a similarity when he/she finds it and then move on, like a beachcomber looking for buried metal.

Locklin avoids the quick, broad strokes by which Alexander Duff rejected Advaita in the nineteenth century. Likewise, he avoids the quick, broad strokes by which John Hick, in the twentieth century, accepted the world's religions as equivalent to each other. Yet Locklin does not remain in the inconclusiveness of his former mentor's work, *Theology after Vedanta*. The result is a *via media* that is a collection of fragments giving intriguing insights but also raising "questions for still deeper conversation" (ibid.). Locklin's study may be a herald of what is coming down the road in comparative theology.

EDWARD T. ULRICH, *University of St. Thomas*.

MILANI, MILAD. *Sufism in the Secret History of Persia*. Gnostica: Texts and Interpretations. Durham, NC: Acumen, 2013. 256 pp. \$72.00 (cloth).

Toward the end of *Sufism in the Secret History of Persia* Milad Milani states that the purpose of his book has been to bring to the fore the major influence of Persian culture on Islamic mysticism that produced a unique Persian brand of Sufism (222). Indeed, Milani does a remarkable job of sifting out and highlighting the various strains and patterns of ancient Persian cultural and religious traditions that have deeply influenced Islamic spirituality and mysticism. Unfortunately, however, his arguments are weakened by the use of an essentialist discourse of repression, overvaluations of Persia's contribution to Islam and Sufism, a lack of clear definitions for key terms, and the mining of Sufi poetry for historical evidence without an understanding of their function as literature.

Milani is at his best when discussing Sufism in terms of a mystical tradition that has been influenced by many different sources, including the important religious and cultural traditions of Persia's ancient past. In chapters 2–5, he is correct in pointing out the many themes, patterns, and symbols from Zoroastrianism and Mithraism that can be found woven into Sufism's mystical tradition. These include moral-spiritualism; bull sacrifice; the centrality of the master-novice relationship; the symbols of water, wine, light, and death; and the concepts of love, *adab*, *fana*, *baqa*, and chivalry. In chapters 6 and 7 he also highlights many correspondences between Mazdakism and Islam, the most important of which being the common egalitarian ideal that informed the early development of both, and which acts as a crucial "lineament" in the history of ideas from Mazdak to Mohammad (153–54). Both chapter 9 and the conclusion are his strongest chapters, wherein he acknowledges the many different strains of Sufism, each stamped by features of the particular Islamic culture from which it arose. Milani ends by stating that the focus of his discussion has therefore been Persia's own unique expression of Sufism, which branches out in a manner peculiar to itself and quite distinct from other kinds of Islamic Mysticism. His book then is an attempt to highlight and preserve this expression of Persian spirituality.

Unfortunately, Milani's use of a rather essentialist vocabulary as part of his discourse of "repression" often weakens his arguments. Instead of conceiving of Islam, Sufism, and Arab and Persian cultures as fluid historical entities and concepts that have blended into and influenced one another over the years, Milani maintains a strict separation of identities in his attempt to espouse a uniquely Persian religiosity. Thus, in Milani's introduction, as he tries to present the divergent character of Iranian spirituality (i.e., Sufism and Shi'ism) in relation to Islamic orthodoxy, he maintains that Islam acts as an alien cultural blanket that has been tucked to fit the contours of Iran's cultural landscape (2). Similarly, in chapter 1 Milani claims

that just as a native English speaker can detect errors in the English spoken by a foreigner, so too can an Arabian Wahabist detect certain syntactical errors in Iran's Shi'ite "accent" of Islam, and orthodox Islam has always detected the alien (read: Persian) tone in the Islamic language of various Sufi groups (16). Such essentialist vocabulary ignores many historical complexities such as the fact that millions of Arabs are Shi'ite, many Persians (if we include Afghans and Tajiks) are Sunni, many important Sufis have been Arab (e.g., Ibn Arabi), and many Persian Sufis were both orthodox Sunnis as well as classically trained Islamic scholars (e.g., Rumi). It also ignores the fact that many of the cultural and religious patterns that Milani claims to be distinctly Persian (e.g., the importance of spiritual masters) can also be found in the other major religions of the Middle East including Christianity, Judaism, and even Islam itself (e.g., Khizr).

The problems that arise from this essentialist vocabulary are also compounded by the fact that Milani often doesn't define his terms. For example, when he uses the terms "Iran," "Persia," and "Persians" the reader wonders if he is referring to the entire modern Persian speaking world, the geographical limits and peoples of ancient Persian empires, the current physical and cultural boundaries of modern Iran, and/or all of the cultures and peoples that have been influenced throughout history by Persian culture and language. Similarly, when Milani uses the terms "Islamic orthodoxy" or "Islamic establishment" the reader wonders if he is referring to Wahhabis (as he seems to imply on page 16), Sunni Islam, Arab Islam, or Islamic scholars and jurists. Any one of these definitions (as well as others) would be problematic and leads to questions that might weaken many of his conclusions.

Milani also often overstates his case for Persia's contribution to Islam and its mystical traditions. The back cover of the book contains the debatable proclamation that it was "Iran which introduced Sufism into Islam," while in chapter 8 Milani presents the idea of a Persian origin for Islam itself by introducing Salman the Persian as the possible Mazdakite author or coauthor (202) of the Qur'an (who used the figure of Gabriel as an alias in order to hide his identity [174–75]), as well as Muhammad's spiritual master (181). The fact that such a thesis is supported by much inference and the careful filtering of evidence makes chapter 8 the weakest in Milani's book.

Finally, Milani's mining of Persian Sufi poetry for historical evidence shows little understanding of their function as *literature*. The mere fact that Persian poets use "Magian Masters" as a common symbol and trope in a poem does not imply secret Zoroastrian loyalties (31–32), just as the prolific use of the symbol of "wine" does not lead to the definitive conclusion that such poets were alcoholics. Milani's discussion of Rumi's *Masnavi* especially leaves much to be desired as he reaches conclusions that are not supported by the text. For example, nowhere is it ever stated in the *Masnavi*'s first story that the handmaiden represents the *nafs* or that the king represents the *ruh* (64). Additionally, despite Milani's claims to the contrary (172–75), Husam al-Din—and not Shams—was the inspiration for the *Masnavi*, as is clearly attested to by the introduction to Book 1 of the *Masnavi* or the proem of Book 2.

Overall, *Sufism in the Secret History of Persia* is a welcome addition to the history of ideas, which highlights the (often overlooked) manner in which ancient Persian culture influenced the Islamic spiritual tradition after the conquest of Persia. Many of Milani's conclusions, however, would have been on a stronger footing if he had discussed these influences in terms of a merging or marriage of two dynamic cultures, rather than as a repression of Persian culture by Islam. Such a discourse of repression itself represses the brilliant spiritual and cultural synthesis that underlies any secret history of Persia and Islam.

AMIN SADR, *Chicago, Illinois.*

ANDERSON, EMMA. *The Death and Afterlife of the North American Martyrs*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013. 362 pp. 25 halftones. \$39.95 (cloth).

The North American martyrs are eight: six Jesuit priests and two lay assistants, canonized by the Roman Catholic Church in 1930 for their heroic lives and deaths in the 1640s among the Iroquoian peoples of the Northeast, especially the Mohawks and Wendats (Hurons). Emma Anderson, Associate Professor of North American Religious History at the University of Ottawa and author of an excellent previous book, *The Betrayal of Faith: The Tragic Journey of a Colonial Native Convert* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), has composed an outstanding analysis of these Jesuits' lives, and of their afterlives, as foci of multifaceted reverence. Anderson examines these martyrs—called such because they chose to die as a sign of their faith—for their symbolic values over the centuries to the present day among American Indians and nonnatives.

Martyrdom was something these Jesuits sought—Isaac Jogues, Jean de Brébeuf, and the others—in order to prove their sanctity and to effect Indian conversions. The Iroquoians may have viewed these missionary intruders as witches and inciters of factionalism; however, to many Catholics of New France, they became models to be honored and perhaps even emulated. Anderson ponders the potential for cross-cultural misunderstandings as Europeans and Native Americans provoked one another in proselytism and violence. Then she recounts the emerging veneration—the cult—of the murdered clerics: the eyewitness accounts of their grisly deaths, the iconic paintings of their demise, the treatment of their remains—a skull, a femur, and other bits—as relics, and the interpretation of their fate as God's will. Many people died in the Iroquoian wars of the seventeenth century in battles over trade routes, national autonomy, and cultural survival, but only the Jesuits were judged by the Church to be saintly martyrs, not, for instance, the Wendat Joseph Chihoatenhwa, a faithful Christian, murdered in 1640.

The conquest of Quebec in 1759, the worldwide suppression of the Jesuits in the 1770s, and the anticlericalism of the French Revolution of 1789 and its aftermath doused the fervor of the martyrs' cult; however, in the nineteenth century the Jesuits returned to North America. Then both in Canada and the United States Catholic minorities revived the martyrs' fame to enhance Catholic collective identity. An archive of Jesuit heroism sparked scholarship, and Catholic archaeologists attempted to locate the precise places of each martyr's murder, thus establishing sacred spaces to inspire pilgrimages. At Auriesville, in the Mohawk Valley in New York State, where Jogues died, the Jesuits constructed a coliseum in 1931, meant to seat at many as 10,000 pilgrims at a time. In Midland, on Ontario's Georgian Bay, a Martyrs' Shrine sponsored an elaborate pageant in 1949 to mark the tricentennial of Brébeuf's torture and death. Nationalism, anti-Communism, regional tourism, and local boosterism all served to sponsor the two competing pilgrimage destinations.

A cult of martyred heroes requires villains. Anderson shows how esteem for the Jesuits depended on images of bloodthirsty Iroquoians who killed out of hatred for the Christian faith. In the late twentieth century, descendants of the Iroquoians bridled under that burden and demanded respect for their heritage, too, including the repatriation and reinterment of their ancestors' bones. Even with a "plurality of perspectives" among native groups—Christians, traditionalists, born-again pagans—these "bones of contention" rankled, and still do (254). Especially at Auriesville Iroquoians resent the portrayal of their forebears as fearsome cannibals. They prefer visiting the shrine across the river at Fonda, dedicated to their own saint, the seventeenth-century Mohawk Catholic convert, Kateri Tekakwitha.

The Journal of Religion

In the post-Vatican II spirit of revisionism, some contemporary Jesuits have turned away from the North American martyrs' cult, eschewing their spiritual ancestors' intolerance and insensitivity toward the Iroquoians and criticizing contemporary stereotypes of native peoples. Perhaps, these priests opine, the Iroquoians had good reasons for ridding themselves of the Jesuit intruders.

As Indian Catholics turn to Kateri, and as Jesuits back away from the cult of missionizing martyrdom, new generations of Catholics—Asian immigrants in Canada, white ultraconservatives in the United States—are attracted to the models of sanctity offered by the martyrs at their two shrines: as examples of interreligious dialogue and multiculturalism in Canada, and as stalwarts refusing to compromise their ideals to the pagan Mohawks, “a society of death, like ours,” (309), they avow. One of the best chapters is Anderson's firsthand account of “pilgrims' progress” (309) to Midlands and Auriesville, with a personal coda on a small shrine to Brébeuf in Normandy, France, where he was born and mostly forgotten, until a few Canadians established a memorial chapel in recent years.

Throughout her book Anderson delves into “a range of subtle meanings” (365) in “the martyrs' long procrustean afterlife” (371) and what it tells us about complexity in religious identity and idealism. She offers no grand theory of religion. The greatness of her book is its awareness of multiple, ever-evolving perspectives regarding the famous Jesuits. She is at all times the observant outsider, even when she places herself into the narrative as contextualized interlocutor. She scans the rich, differing range of contestants at any one time (e.g., the Iroquoians and the Jesuits and what they thought about torture, courage, and virtue; or the native converts, nativists, and apostates among the Wendats and Mohawks and what they thought of Catholics, and of each other, in the 1640s), or over time, from one generation to the next (for instance, before and after Vatican II). Her differentiations between Quebec and Ontario, the United States and Canada, Fonda and Auriesville, and so forth, reflect a variety of views on the sacred and the grounds on which they are stationed. She gives all her subjects a say, as they stand for their principles and as they change their minds. Not by theory, but by observation, she shows how embedded religion is in particular human contexts.

CHRISTOPHER VECSEY, *Colgate University*.

NEUMAN, MEREDITH MARIE. *Jeremiah's Scribes: Creating Sermon Literature in Puritan New England*. Material Texts. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. 280 pages. \$69.95 (cloth).

In her study of printed sermons and manuscript sermon notebooks, Meredith Neuman argues that preachers and laypeople together created a Puritan sermonic literature that shaped other forms of Puritan written expression. In line with scholarly work on book history and transatlantic Puritanism, Neuman offers an account of Puritan life in which preachers wrestled with the relationship between divine and human language and lay listeners responded by recording their responses in notebooks and testing sermon themes in their daily experiences. Clergy and laypeople, together, composed a “discursive interpretative community” (29).

In the introduction, Neuman addresses two common approaches to the Puritan sermon. For scholars who assume its central importance, she reframes its centrality by arguing that the genre's significance lies not in its clerical authorship or its stability as a medium but rather in the community of speakers, listeners, and printers that sermons engaged and the variety of its forms through which sermons were experienced (7–8). For scholars of Puritan literature who avoid the sermon, Neu-

man claims that sermon culture, as it was cocreated by clergy and laity, is strongly connected to other literary genres that reflected on the Puritan soul (5).

To support her claims, Neuman uses both printed sermons and manuscript sermon notebooks kept by listeners from all levels of Puritan society. Her book includes several illustrations from manuscript notebook pages that display the variety of marginal comments, shorthand techniques, and textual juxtapositions created by auditors. The images reinforce the interpretative potential of close reading manuscript notebooks, especially when Neuman compares handwritten notes with printed versions of the same sermonic event.

Neuman's analysis relies on methods employed by historians of the book, scholarship on Reformation-era theologies of scripture and language, and literary analysis of Puritan writing more broadly. She begins her book with the details of the sermon experience and moves toward broader theological and genre considerations. In chapters 1–3, Neuman explores the many players involved in a sermon's progression from oral event, to manuscript notes, and eventually to printed and circulated piece. Neuman then considers the interpretative possibilities of manuscript notebooks. She contemplates the material realities that auditors experienced, such as close margins, paper shortages, and running ink. She also analyzes and categorizes types of notetaking and collation that listeners employed to show that individual auditors differed in their reception of the sermons they heard.

In chapters 3–5, Neuman details the process involved in collecting and editing sermons for print. She uses this discussion to explore Puritan anxieties over the relationship of human to divine language, the problems created by scripture's perfection and humanity's fallen nature, and the difficulties involved in the Puritans' commitment to plain reading of biblical texts. Neuman probes the vulnerabilities and paradoxes at the heart of Puritan spirituality and, most basically, the instability inherent in human efforts to read and explicate sacred texts.

Reflecting on the unstable and multivoiced process of proclaiming, receiving, and circulating the word leads Neuman to connect the themes of sermon culture with other Puritan genres. In chapter 5, she explores the way sermon literature relates to lay testimony, conversion and captivity narratives, and poetry. In this discussion, Neuman once again considers the problem of interpreting scripture, hearing the word, receiving it, and narrating its effects on one's life. Neuman explores the contradictions at the heart of Puritan spirituality. She analyzes the many ways Puritans expressed their struggle with a God who communicated through language, even as sinful humanity remained to some degree incapacitated in their efforts to interpret.

Throughout the book, Neuman anticipates the objections sure to come her way. Sermons as aural experiences are lost to us. We have only manuscript notes and then printed literature relating to those original aural experiences. Neuman insists that Puritans left us enough material records to at least attempt an understanding of the relationship between speakers, listeners, writers, and printers. She offers fascinating interpretations of the ways that lay auditors collated and juxtaposed texts, the markings they made, and the kind of notes they took. At the same time, Neuman acknowledges her project's risks. She admits that some conjecture is required. She hopes to persuade readers that the benefit—in which we see Puritan auditors as agents in the creation of sermon culture—is worth it.

With this study, Neuman extends work on Puritan scripture reading and sermon culture by scholars such as Lisa Gordis and Andrew Cambers. Neuman's book is also a helpful backdrop to works, like Mark Valeri's *Heavenly Merchandize* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), that use manuscript notebooks, among other sources, to show how Puritans applied the sermons they heard to their daily lives.

Scholars interested in the theological intricacies of Reformation epistemology will be particularly interested in Neuman's discussion of language, biblical interpretation, and human fallibility. Scholars of religious studies, particularly those concerned with lived religion, popular religion, or religious practice, can be inspired by Neuman's willingness to think creatively about the relationship between speakers and auditors, notetaking and printing, and the word heard in the pew and daily life in homes and streets. While scholars have made great use of methods from the history of the book to understand New England Puritanism, these scholarly practices have yet to filter into other areas of North American religious history. Work on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially, has yet to realize the potential of considering written accounts of oral experiences or book marking by laypeople. Neuman's book inspires historians of these periods to consider such materials as part of broader circles of circulation, as well as steps in the process of creating religious practitioners' subjectivity.

JENNIFER GRABER, *University of Texas at Austin*.

SMITH, CHRISTIAN; LONGEST, KYLE; HILL, JONATHAN; and CHRISTOFFERSEN, KARL. *Young Catholic America: Emerging Adults In, Out of, and Gone from the Church*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 336 pp. \$29.95 (cloth).

"Compared both to official Catholic norms of faithfulness and to other types of Christian teens in the United States, contemporary U.S. Catholic teens are faring rather badly" (Christian Smith, with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2005], 216). Thus concluded Christian Smith a decade ago in his landmark study of American adolescent religion. The cause, he then speculated, was "upward mobility and mainstream acculturation" that produced "relative religious laxity" among Catholic parents, who in turn passed on that laxity to their teen offspring (216–17). In *Young Catholic America*, Smith and his coauthors provide comprehensive confirmation of Smith's speculation in 2005. Analyzing three waves of survey and interview data now available in the National Study of Youth and Religion, the authors track Catholic teens through adolescence and into early adulthood, tutor readers about the nature and challenges of longitudinal survey research, and confirm that traditional Catholic faith transmission "had drastically eroded" following World War II—making parents of these emerging adults a "lost generation [from the Church]" (26) and leaving their offspring "indistinguishable" (24) from non-Catholic emerging adults except for Catholic emerging adults' significantly lower rates of church attendance.

Using seven chapters along with an introduction and conclusion, Smith and colleagues focus in chapter 1 on their assessment of what happened to Catholic emerging adults from 1945 to 1970 that left them so unenthusiastic about religion. Their parents, who mostly came of age in Catholic and ethnically segregated—yet deeply formative—neighborhoods, experienced as adults America's postwar prosperity, benefited from the expansion of higher education, moved to the suburbs, and relished their admittance into the American mainstream (culminating in the 1960 election of President John F. Kennedy). This midcentury, middle-class arrival of white Catholics was marked, the authors argue, by high levels of "acculturation . . . [to] material prosperity, educational broadening, ecumenical tolerance, moral diversity, and liberal individualism" (12) and, when combined with the American bishops' "less than ideal job of instructing the faithful in the pews about [Vatican II's] teachings and [its] implications" (14), resulted in ineffective "catechesis of the young" (15). Documenting the decline of priests and men and women religious and the comparatively low gen-

erosity of American Catholics to the church, the authors demonstrate that there were insufficient human and economic resources to do anything more than maintain religious education and parochial school structures. The lack both of funds for updating curricula or piloting school innovations and of the leadership to do so produced an entire generation (i.e., the enormous Baby Boom) ambivalent about their Catholic faith.

In chapter 2, Smith and colleagues demonstrate that since the 1970s, Catholic emerging adults possess remarkably similar religious beliefs and practices. “Eighteen- to 25-year-old Catholics in the 2000s look very much like 18- to 25-year-olds in the 1970s on a variety of measures. Whatever historical changes happened among Catholic emerging adults on these measures, therefore, for the most part happened before the 1970s” (30). The “one huge exception” to the authors’ story of pre-1970s declension is attendance at mass. “Catholic emerging adults exhibit a strong decline in church attendance over these four decades [i.e., 1970s through 2000s], and a sharper decline than their non-Catholic peers” (265). The authors do not offer an explanation for this exception, but they do present analyses indicating that this decline will not reverse as emerging adults age, form families, and settle into middle adulthood.

The remaining five chapters supply additional detail and more specific analyses. Contemporary Catholic emerging adults are statistically profiled and typed in chapter 3 and more personally introduced and profiled via in-depth interview data in chapter 4. A methodological primer on statistically defining Catholics is slotted in before chapter 5, which lays out religious trajectories from the teen years to early adulthood—a familiar story for readers of Smith with Patricia Snell’s *Souls in Transition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009): stability of religious patterns for the majority, declines in religious belief and practice for a sizable minority, and increases in piety for a few. Chapter 6 demonstrates that those emerging adults who fit the criteria of practicing Catholics also possess the life course benefits that devout emerging adults of any faith possess: better relationships with parents, higher educational achievement, greater personal and physical satisfaction, more civic engagement, and fewer risk behaviors. The church-affiliating effects of K–12 Catholic schooling are the sole focus of the final chapter. Any positive schooling effects can be explained by parental religiosity, peer religiosity, and socioeconomic status—except for those students whose parents were not practicing Catholics, among whom Catholic school attendance increases the likelihood of maintaining a Catholic affiliation into emerging adulthood.

Three audiences should read this book. The primary audience is practicing Catholics, and US bishops in particular. This will be a difficult book for them to read, however, for it is a bleak portrait and methodologically dense in places. The second audience is Catholic studies researchers, especially those who focus on young adults, survey analysis, or recent American Catholicism. This is the definitive statement on young adults in, on the edges of, and running from the American Catholic Church; it merits a place on these researchers’ bookshelves. Finally, this book should be read by any scholar of contemporary religion or voluntary organizations interested in a case study (albeit a massive one) of what happens when a voluntary religious organization fails to socialize its young effectively—and does so for a quarter century. I find it remarkable, after reading this account, that the American Catholic Church has as many adherents and affiliates as it does. Spotty socialization, combined with a widespread view of “religion as a Very Nice Thing” (Smith, *Soul Searching*, 124), is apparently sufficient to keep one in five emerging adults still connected.

TIM CLYDESDALE, *College of New Jersey*.

VICKERS, JASON E., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to American Methodism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 405 pp. \$90.00 (cloth); \$32.99 (paper).

The main features of Methodism's American story are familiar. From meager pre-Revolution beginnings to astonishing antebellum growth and enormous cultural influence, from controversial charismatic revivalism to mainline liberalism and holiness splintering, the structures of the Methodist narrative seem straightforward. But this simple plotline belies a movement of tremendous complexity. American Methodism is the product of paradox—"dialectical friction," David Hempton has called it (*Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005])—its many tensions producing variegated expressions.

Given Methodism's cultural significance and internal intricacies, we have long needed reference material that effectively catalogs its elements and navigates its histories. Jason Vickers's *Cambridge Companion to American Methodism* begins to meet that need. In eighteen chapters, combining description and analysis in varying proportions, this volume addresses a wide range of Methodist matters. The book opens with Vickers's chapter on Methodism as a theological tradition. Such an opening symbolically and substantively challenges an entrenched norm in the study of Methodism, which tends to see the movement as too pragmatic and diverse to be theologically coherent or profound. Vickers argues that Methodism generated deep doctrinal commitments and creatively adapted and combined five strains of religious sensibility and that its diverse theological impulses retain important possibilities for coherence. Though the essays that follow Vickers's often do not share his particular commitment to the centrality of theology, a shared effort to find comprehensibility amid complexity persists throughout the volume. Some of the essays succeed in that effort more thoroughly than others.

After the opening chapter on theology, the next three essays engage Methodism chronologically, each covering one of the movement's three centuries. Russell Richey makes sense of its eighteenth-century emergence from the complex brew of transatlantic pietisms by identifying a "triadic" pattern: the combination of itinerant preaching, communities of witness, and doctrinal discipline (46). Douglas Strong tackles the nineteenth century—arguably Methodism's most bewildering period of "expansion and fragmentation"—avoiding a morass of endless denominational differences by centering his essay on the primary matters of authority, race, sanctification, and respectability (63). Wendy Deichmann approaches the twentieth century as a contrapuntal narrative of denominational reunion and multicultural diversification. Though breaking the chronological story of Methodism into three different essays contributes to the book's overall lack of integration, the authors' distinctive approaches underscore the variety associated with both the content and the writing of Methodist history.

Following these historical surveys, the book transitions to its second set of essays, those focused on American Methodism's "religious culture." This section—the largest of the three, highlighting belief and praxis, and found in the center of the book—forms the heart of the volume. Michael Turner's essay on "Preaching and Revivalism" replicates the familiar arc of Methodism's journey from ecstatic revivalism to respectability, but Turner attributes this evolution to a steady commitment to cultural responsiveness rather than a retreat from Methodism's true identity. In the following essay, Karen Westerfield Tucker's encyclopedic approach to life-cycle ceremonies reinforces a picture of Methodism characterized by shared commitments and diverse expressions. Douglas Koskela then addresses the matter of Methodist polity, complicating the standard story in which itinerants settle and classes disappear with evidence of the old discipline's survivals in various denominations and

varied forms. Brooks Holifield's chapter on the clergy also modifies a declension narrative as he skillfully weaves his analysis through the themes of authority, education, race and ethnicity, and social reform. Jennifer Woodruff Tait's companion chapter on the laity notes persisting tensions between models of lay involvement that focus on either pastoral oversight or supplemental ministry, highlighting the particularly important place that lay leadership opportunities have had in the histories of Methodist women. In the next essay, Maura Jane Farrelly provides a treatment of Methodism's complex relationship to its own ascetic commitments, using Methodist ambivalence toward tobacco as an intriguing backdrop. Candy Gunther Brown follows with an essay titled "Healing," which begins with early Methodists' medical and spiritual remedies for the illnesses of the faithful, then details the polarizing conflict that emerged between holiness advocates of divine healing and the mainline proponents of medicine, and concludes with a story of some rapprochement as the charismatic movements rediscover a Methodist faith in medical science. Ted Campbell's subsequent chapter on spiritual biographies provides a helpful theological and historical framework in which to view these sources that have been so crucial to our study of Methodist history, arguing that these narratives became both descriptive of, and prescriptive for, proper Methodist conversion. In the section's final essay, Stan Ingersol takes on the question of education, placing a commitment to teaching and learning consistently at the center of the American Methodist experience.

In the third section, the book turns to the relationship between American Methodism and the surrounding society. Questions of race recur throughout the book, but Morris Davis's chapter on racial views and Dennis Dickerson's on civil rights helpfully provide sustained focus. Davis uses Methodist missiology to illustrate the ways in which racialized assumptions doggedly shaped the churches even as they experienced repeated impulses to racial reconciliation; Dickerson trains his attention on African Americans themselves, charting a long and cohesive tradition of black Methodism and social holiness insurgency that stretches from Richard Allen to Rosa Parks to A. Philip Randolph. Lacey Warner's chapter on American Methodist women likewise highlights missions and exemplary biographies, concluding with a history of women who repeatedly broke through barriers to achieve ever higher ecclesiastical office but still face obstacles to full equality. Andrew Wood's essay on Methodism and war shows how Arminian theology and unparalleled cultural prominence generated among Methodists a sense of divine responsibility for the nation's foreign policy; but this collective assumption of responsibility often evoked ambivalent and conflicting views toward armed conflicts. And in the book's last essay, on Methodism and popular culture, Christopher Anderson demonstrates the ways in which Methodism resisted and recruited new modes of cultural expression in its defense of Christ's cause.

The title of this volume—and, hence, my usage throughout this essay—is somewhat misleading. It may be more appropriate to speak of America's Methodisms than of American Methodism. The movements that trace back to Wesleyan awakenings have been many things: hierarchical and democratic, racist and equalitarian, respectable and disruptive, unifying and divisive. Planted in paradox, the Methodist impulse has flowered in variety. Even as it seeks valiantly for coherence, this anthology evinces the depth of Methodist diversity in ways that perhaps only an anthological approach can.

DAVID HOLLAND, *Harvard Divinity School*.

DRURY, JOHN. *Music at Midnight: The Life and Poetry of George Herbert*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. xx+396 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

John Drury, chaplain and fellow of All Souls College, University of Oxford, has written a beautiful book on the life and poetry of the English religious poet and Anglican clergyman George Herbert (1593–1633). Richly researched sources, profound reflections, gorgeous prose, and ample illustrations make this text a joy to read. Drury's explicit purpose is "to make Herbert familiar to the modern reader" (xviii). But this is not merely an updated appraisal of the man and his works. Drury has produced a holistic study that symphonically interweaves biographical and literary critical melodies so inseparably that, having finished the book, I now find it difficult to imagine an adequate assessment of Herbert done in any other way, though interpretations will certainly vary.

Herbert scholars are faced with significant roadblocks. We have surprisingly little documented information about his life, and we cannot date individual poems accurately. Aside from the works he wrote in Latin, none of his poems were published in his lifetime. His English poems existed only in manuscript form and were revised and reordered over time and finally published posthumously. By contextualizing those poems in Herbert's life and times and, in turn, reflecting on the circumstances of his life through his analyses of the poems, Drury has advanced a convincing narrative of the development of Herbert's works while at the same time proposing a well-reasoned imaginative reconstruction of his life. Along the way, he inserts illuminating reminders and some new gems of insight about influences on Herbert, including Sir Philip Sidney, William Shakespeare, John Donne, Sir Francis Bacon, and his brother, Edward (later Lord Herbert of Cherbury). He also deals with those whom Herbert influenced and with the reception of his works both during and after his own time.

Drury is adept at harmonizing biographical and literary critical approaches to Herbert, for the most part without compromising the integrity of either type of analysis. There are two potential pitfalls in such an endeavor. The first is viewing the poetry through a lens too colored by biographical concerns—and so missing the full rhetorical power of the poetry—and the second is assuming the realities of Herbert's life and world are accurately represented by the tropes in the poetry—thus preempting our ability to recognize the actual circumstances of his life, which also undercuts a proper contextualization of his works. Drury avoids both hazards much of the time, yet there are numerous instances throughout the book in which he too readily extracts lines from Herbert's poetry and takes them as expressive of Herbert's own beliefs and attitudes, without adequate interpretation of those works. How often do Herbert's poems (like those of many great authors) give voice to beliefs, hopes, and fears with complex rhetorical purposes—sometimes to achieve effects quite the opposite of the plain sense of those verses? How often do his writings simply offer a redemptive battleground where we can give voice and ear to the incommensurable meanings slugging it out in our hearts and minds? So there are places throughout this book where the literary critical themes of the symphony do fade out, and we end up with a much smaller rendition of Herbert's poetry than I think is warranted by the evidence left to us.

This problem is exacerbated by Drury's general neglect of the implied audiences of these poems. He helps us make our own educated guesses about them by the ways in which he situates the poems in the events and concerns of Herbert's time. But I wish he would have offered more help on that score, given his profound comprehension of Herbert's existential circumstances. Discerning a work's intended au-

diences is always crucial to determining accurately the rhetorical purpose and meaning of any artistic work.

Readers schooled in contemporary literary criticism will recognize here a work that harks back in some ways to a bygone era of scholarship. Drury constructs a vision of Herbert (the man and the poet) informed by his own religious sensibilities but without clearly disclosing or examining the interpretive fault lines created by those ideological investments. And he appeals repeatedly to “the modern reader” in ways that often reveal a relatively narrow conception of his own audience (e.g., by assuming agreement on various theological issues where, in fact, little consensus exists today). I can’t help but appreciate, and even envy, the beauty of the kind of account Drury has produced here, but it cannot do justice to the astounding rhetorical versatility of Herbert’s poetry, and it leaves itself open to many relevant questions and concerns that readers will simply not find addressed in these pages.

Despite these shortcomings, I find Drury’s method fascinating and genuinely revelatory of both Herbert’s life and works. I recommend this book for anyone interested in Herbert. General readers looking for an introductory work will discover a good guide here: they will probably find Drury’s attention to details of poetic meter and rhyme laborious, but they will appreciate his explanations of the context of Herbert’s life and times and his definitions of archaic words in the poetry. Seasoned readers of Herbert will not need the introductory treatment of some aspects of Herbert’s social and religious context but will be intrigued by Drury’s method and the insights it yields. I also recommend this work as a valuable case study for any scholar struggling to write in the challenging genre of the literary life.

JENNIFER G. JESSE, *Truman State University*.

GARDELLA, PETER. *American Civil Religion: What Americans Hold Sacred*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. xi+368 pp. \$99.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

The organizing claim of Peter Gardella’s *American Civil Religion: What Americans Hold Sacred* is that the “timidity and precision” of the rather large body of literature on the subject of an/the American civil religion obscures the fact that the oft-decried faith tradition is a “real religion” (1, 2). Citing his own, prior definition of religion as “a system of nonrational commitments that holds life together” (5)—a definition that evokes Émile Durkheim, even while the text’s focus on the texts and monuments of what might be called an American *muthos* more forcefully suggests Clifford Geertz—Gardella seeks to provide “an outline and guide to American civil religion, including its places and symbolic dimensions as well as its texts and values” (367). In the author’s judgment, Americans’ affective attachment to, or common veneration of, for example, the American flag, Arlington National Cemetery, and Disney theme parks warrants taking American civil religion seriously as a matter of lived religion.

While Gardella sidesteps many of the questions and live debates that grow out of Robert Bellah’s seminal treatment of the subject—ranging from definitional concerns to the question of whether Bellah’s account is descriptive, constructive, or some combination of the two—Bellah’s “Civil Religion in America” (*Daedalus* 96, no. 1 [1967]: 1–21) provides the basic template on which Gardella’s treatment expands. As with Bellah, the American civil religion is divided into phases, although the periodization is substantially reconfigured, and it (putatively) complements, rather than supersedes, the various other faith traditions to which Americans subscribe. Here too are the tacit constructive heft of an explicitly descriptive project and the

emphasis on perduring themes or values, of which Gardella names four—liberty, democracy, peace, and tolerance—contending that Americans share in these by way of the pedagogy of “monuments, texts, and images” (5). Beyond the introduction, the book offers encyclopedia entry-style treatments of those monuments, texts, and images, and Gardella takes care to note where the four values find expression and where particular artifacts either signal shifts in the phases of American civil religion or undergo resignification in line with period change. Highlights of the latter tack include Gardella’s account of the shifting significations of both the National Mall and the Liberty Bell and the ways in which they track with “the development of American civil religion in all its phases” (323–44, 75).

Owing to the general faithfulness of Gardella’s retrieval of Bellah’s original argument, one could imagine the two texts working productively in tandem in undergraduate classrooms—providing a general overview of American civil religion and ample ground for a focused interrogation thereof. Indeed, the reportorial fashion of Gardella’s prose produces moments of observation where persons familiar with the larger discourse on American civil religion might implore the text for further commentary and analysis. To cite one example among many, when Gardella describes the configuration of the Lincoln Memorial, he contends that the engraved texts of Lincoln’s Gettysburg and second inaugural addresses “challenge all images of national or imperial triumph,” thereby tacitly rebuking the common charge that the American civil religion and its monuments are complicit in facile American exceptionalism. He then continues: “Above the two speeches are two murals painted by Jules Guerin: one above the Gettysburg Address in which an angel liberates slaves, and the other above the Second Inaugural, in which an angel brings together North and South [in the aftermath of the America Civil War]. If the murals were more visible, their theme of angelic intervention might blunt the impact of Lincoln’s words, but their position and lighting mean that few notice them. For most visitors, the experience of the Lincoln Memorial consists of confronting Lincoln, reading the speeches or parts of the speeches, and turning to Lincoln again” (230). Rather than clarifying the manner in which the angels “might blunt the impact of Lincoln’s words” if more visible—through, for example, a discussion of the myth of black passivity or an account of the ways in which postwar reunion culture eviscerated the Civil War’s “radical potential”—the ensuing text describes the on-site gift shop (230).

The larger concerns with *American Civil Religion* likewise stem from its organization. In the introduction, Gardella promises an argument that “the [ancient] Roman model [of civil religion] has become more prevalent [in America], especially as the American sphere of influence in the world has grown larger” (7). While he quickly acknowledges that “American civil religion can also be fiercely monotheistic and biblical,” the commitment to the “Roman” claim produces a baffling reading of Julia Ward Howe’s “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” wherein Gardella is at pains to argue that Howe was able “to transcend Christian imagery” and that the song “belongs more to American civil religion than to Christianity” (170–71). Counterpoising Christianity and American civil religion, Gardella reduplicates Bellah’s original naïveté concerning the discreteness of the two traditions, this despite having the benefit of the intervening wealth of critical literature on American secularism and its identification and critique of (especially Protestant) Christianity as an unmarked center in US cultural and political logics. The episodic structure of the text fore-stalls both an argument against this scholarship and a full-throated defense of the “Roman” claim.

Relatedly, I wager that most readers would appreciate a more focused treatment of the historicity of the four values that Gardella argues unify the American civil religion, and I would cite two instances where the lack is manifestly problematic.

First, Gardella writes, “Clearly, the US government that ordered the confinement of its own citizens of Japanese ancestry to internment camps in 1942, or that dropped more bombs on Vietnam than were dropped by all sides in World War II, or that enforced slavery and forbade Native Americans to practice their religions, cannot be identified with liberty, democracy, peace, and tolerance” (6). Second, Gardella describes as ironic the simultaneous “birth of representative democracy” and arrival of the first African slaves in the colonies in 1619 Jamestown (17–18). The problem is that the claims of incompatibility and irony are anachronistic. Gardella’s local judgments presume transhistorical definition and scope for the four values, failing to account for the historical evolution of acceptable or legible humanity. More globally, they reify the problematic status of history, and of the tension between descriptive and constructive work, in the civil religion thesis writ large. When Gardella concludes his account of Jamestown’s “role as the primal location of American civil religion” with the summary judgment that the four values “have all attained their places” there and that “the tragic sense of the past has not been obliterated” (30), one wonders what it might mean for that tragic sense to become a fully realized fifth value rather than a matter of double-entry bookkeeping—and whether a contemporary account of American civil religion ought be an agent in that change.

JOHN HOWELL, *University of Chicago*.

MCLEAN, B. H. *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. viii+320 pp. \$104.99 (cloth); \$29.99 (paper).

It may surprise some biblical scholars to learn that their field has wandered from its own intellectual tradition. According to B. H. McLean’s *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics*, this is indeed the case, and what is more, a return to hermeneutical tradition can counteract the pitfalls of historicist research, which attempts to relate textual evidence to what actually happened.

McLean’s purpose is to reclaim hermeneutical and literary theory in order to identify and cultivate “post-historical” modes of biblical interpretation (2). His analysis presents the “crisis of historical meaning” (4) with two fine chapters on signification and authorship, followed by chapters on Heidegger, the Bultmann-Barth debate, and the linguistic turn; the book’s third section presents the posthistoricist hermeneutics of Gadamer, Habermas, Ricoeur, Levinas, and Deleuze and Guattari. McLean introduces each of these cases lucidly, leaving the reader to consider how they apply to biblical studies.

The rift between hermeneutical theory and biblical scholarship goes back at least to Wilhelm Dilthey’s expansion of hermeneutics from textual methods to general cultural phenomena, though this move has clear antecedents in Schleiermacher. Studies of this history by Hans Frei and Jonathan Sheehan show how divisions between biblical scholarship and hermeneutics began much earlier, thanks not only to new research on biblical languages and history but also to shifts in religious institutions, imaginative literature, and academic fields.

What led biblical research to sever its ties to hermeneutical thought in pursuit of historicism may be explained by the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the myth of secularization. Today’s historicist scholarship stands on the foundations of philology and archaeology. Hermeneutics, meanwhile, has drifted away from textual exegesis, especially when it intersects with religious practice. While a growing number of scholars seeks to balance these interests, many others see a sharp divide between historical research on the one hand and hermeneutical reflection on the other.

The Journal of Religion

McLean's study is less concerned with what caused this rift than how it can be overcome. For biblical scholars trained mostly in philology, the project requires more reconstruction than restoration, since so much theoretical research has appeared in recent years. By engaging hermeneutical thinkers and approaches, McLean demonstrates the value and challenge of acquainting biblical scholars with their estranged intellectual colleagues.

The models McLean surveys offer alternatives to historicist research, but obstacles remain. With the exception of fine examples in the first and second chapters that integrate biblical research with surveys of signification, Saussurian linguistics, and questions of authorship, the study does not connect theory to practice. A brief section on current New Testament studies in the chapter on the crisis of historical meaning reads like an insertion. The discussion of Heidegger's readings of Galatians and 1 Thessalonians elucidates his ideas of history and time more than the biblical texts (chap. 5). Later chapters on Bultmann, Barth (chap. 6), Gadamer (chap. 8), and Habermas (chap. 9) survey hermeneutical debates effectively without saying enough about biblical research.

More original if equally unbiblical are the chapters on Levinas (chap. 11) and Deleuze and Guattari (chap. 12) that extend beyond familiar hermeneutical territory into promising areas of theoretical reflection. The Habermas chapter attempts to cover too much ground—critical theory and speech act theory—but it introduces several issues usefully. Levinas contributes a distinctively ethical perspective that provides McLean with a rejection of the nihilism that nags some contemporary approaches; his "hermeneutics of solicitation" opens the reader up to the other of the text (265). This ethical grounding allows McLean one further move—the category of embodiment theorized by Deleuze and Guattari. Their "rhizomatic" paradigm opens multiple paths to interpretation and challenges linear historical methods obsessed with textual sources. The nomadic theoretical landscape of Deleuze and Guattari reminds McLean of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah, whose wanderings lead to unknown destinations without return. McLean concludes, in fact, by comparing current readers to biblical nomads, who "can respond to G-d's call to 'Go forth from' our 'own country' and journey toward a new land, which we as yet cannot imagine" (312).

The image of readers as biblical nomads gestures toward theological issues worth exploring. The historicism McLean challenges is typically secular and materialist, and theology belongs to discussions not only of particular thinkers like Bultmann and Heidegger but also, just as importantly, to hermeneutical and biblical research in general. For a book dedicated to the study of the "spiritual dimension" of the "Christian scriptures," this theological reticence is puzzling (1, 7).

If we can blame secular modernity for the historicism of biblical studies, the task to generate posthistorical hermeneutics can also be called a post-Enlightenment, or even postsecularist, endeavor. Challenging Enlightenment secularism could thus entail a turn or return to sectarian religion, but it could also involve the genealogical work of contextualizing the Enlightenment in biblical tradition. This approach would ask how historicism belongs within biblical tradition rather than outside it. Framing biblical scholarship in this way would provincialize it, asking how even its critical and scientific aspirations bear the inheritance of the centuries of commentary that came before it. New research in reception studies, along with discussions of postsecularism, relates even the most secular phenomena to the centuries of tradition that preceded them.

The last few decades of biblical scholarship have witnessed dramatic shifts in the historicist paradigm, and many recent studies have grappled with the methods and paradigms McLean surveys. It is regrettable that McLean's study takes little advan-

tage of this scholarship, because his unusual mastery of biblical and theoretical material has much to offer. One senses that McLean sees how to integrate interpretive theory and practice, but his study provides only clues on how that can be done.

The goal to establish biblical studies beyond historicism is ambitious, and it will require further integration and development along the lines McLean has identified. The main contribution of *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics* is its clear and insightful surveys of hermeneutical problems, methods, and models. Students and scholars will be able to use McLean's study as a valuable handbook to the thinkers and approaches it introduces.

BRIAN BRITT, *Virginia Tech.*

SHAMDASINI, SONU. *C. G. Jung: A Biography in Books*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012. 224 pp. \$65.00 (cloth).

At random I open *C. G. Jung: A Biography in Books*. I find, on a two-page spread, images of several tomes of Jung's handwritten journal of waking dreams, the *Black Book*, its volumes both stacked and open: books on books, books within this book about books.

The above evocations of chance, dream, obsessive repetition, and personal experience speak to important dimensions of the religious bibliomania on display in Sonu Shamdasani's exquisitely produced biography of Jung. In fact, Shamdasani, who edited Jung's remarkable *Red Book*, opens his lucid, involving account of Jung's book-obsessed life by imagining a chance encounter between Jung and Martin Bodmer, another bibliophile whose books, along with Jung's, are on display in the present volume. This fantasy of an encounter between Jung and Bodmer is realized, in some sense, by the juxtaposition of facsimiles from their respective libraries.

Shamdasani then notes a recurring dream Jung experienced in the 1920s—a dream of a library that anticipates the one that Jung will eventually assemble in his own house, as he pursues his relentless investigations into the human psyche (7–9). For Jung, as the dream suggests, there is a deep intimacy, even equation, between libraries, houses, and dreams, an intimacy probed throughout this “biography in books.”

Shamdasani proposes to take readers on a “stroll through Jung's library”—the books that populate Jung's house and his dreams, the books that he reads and the books he writes. Shamdasani is quick to admit that his account will not comprise an annotated “inventory” of Jung's library. This is surely a happy fact. But neither is it the “serendipitous browse” that Shamdasani claims it will be. The serendipity lies not in Shamdasani's approach but rather in the turns of Jung's life. Shamdasani's biographical narration thus “trace[s] some of Jung's pivotal encounters with books” (9).

These pivotal encounters punctuate the entirety of Jung's reading life, from his youth, when he devoured “drama, poetry, and history voraciously” (12); through his studies in philosophy (Nietzsche will play a key role for Jung, informing both his psychological insights and his writing style); into his vast readings in psychology (Jung reports that as a mere prelude to his researches, he consumed the “fifty volumes of the *Allegemeine Zeitschrift für Psychiatrie* . . . from its very beginnings, in order to acquaint myself with the psychiatric mentality” [36]); on to folklore, mythology, mystical theology, and comparative religion (knowledge of which he considered essential for a practicing analyst); and culminating in his decades-long research into alchemy, which he considered to be not the search for an “elixir of long life” but rather a mystical practice “aiming for moral perfection” (166)—and in this way closely akin to the spiritual undertaking of his own psychotherapeutic practice. (“The alchemical process is the process of individuation,” Jung wrote [169]).

The Journal of Religion

It thus appears that, like his contemporary Mircea Eliade, Jung simply read *everything*. He consumed vast quantities of literature, from the classics through modernist novels and popular fiction. Some may find it surprising that Jung had a distaste for Greek tragedies and Shakespeare; nor did he care much for Joyce. On the other hand, he found in popular fiction—mystery novels and the like—the spontaneous expression of the collective unconscious, making it valuable material for psychological insight.

And of course Jung not only read but also wrote voluminously, all the while maintaining the clinical practice that he saw as inseparable from his theoretical and scholarly explorations; each vitalized the other. Shamdasini's narrative does a fine job of addressing the importance, in this connection, not only of Jung's published professional works but also of the journals in which Jung provoked and recorded what he called the "active imaginings"—deliberate, quasi-hallucinatory engagements with the collective unconscious—that brought Jung to the brink of madness on the way to spiritual illumination.

Pages from these notebooks, replete with Jung's colorful paintings of mandalas and fantastic figures, are among the images that grace this sumptuously illustrated book. There are also excellent facsimiles of pages from Jung's handwritten manuscripts. The deeply sensual dimension of this volume is wholly appropriate to the biographical account that Shamdasini offers, for it suggests a coincidence or union of word and image as well as of intellect and bodily, sensorial facticity—something that Jung himself sought to cultivate through a therapeutic practice addressing the total person, the "soul." Indeed, Jung saw in psychiatry the "empirical field common to biological and spiritual facts" (34).

Jung's own spiritual quest, animated everywhere by books, is the real heart of this biography. Jung himself attested to an "absolute craving . . . to read every scrap of printed matter" available to him (10). His "earliest literary recollection" was that of the legend of the Grail. In a very real sense, his early "uncanny fascination" with this legend propelled Jung's lifelong "religious quest," a quest that, though informed by scholarly and philological methods, was nonetheless not limited by those methods; for Jung, a "religious attitude" provided a vital counter to purely intellectual activity and was therefore necessary for realizing the divinity that he located in the human psyche (88).

In this way, Jung was something of an intellectual and religious heretic, beholden neither to the rigors of scholarly objectivity nor to the dogmas of religious institutions. "Jung realized that the divine wanted to live with him," writes Shamdasini. Jung therefore took "a model that shows how to live the divine, namely Christ." But "if he tried to imitate Christ, he would never reach his own goal," for "Christ had not emulated anyone. . . . So to truly imitate Christ does not mean imitating someone but to go one's own way" (88).

Going one's own way is among the great lessons of Jung's life. This lesson is reflected in what some readers may find to be a surprising infrequency of appearances of Sigmund Freud in the present biographical narrative. This is a deliberate eschewal; Shamdasini emphasizes that Freud was less influential on Jung than is commonly thought. He cites Jung himself on this point: "I in no way exclusively stem from Freud. I had my scientific attitude and the theory of complexes before I met Freud" (44).

Although *C. G. Jung* mentions Jung's break with Freud, as well as a host of other intellectual disputes of which Jung was a part, the real purpose of this book is not to offer detailed engagement with Jung's theoretical achievements nor to rehearse the intricacies of the debates of Jung's day. Those looking for sustained critical evaluation of Jung's ideas will want to look elsewhere.

The purpose of this book is, rather, to provide a spiritual biography of a thinker for whom scholarship and psychotherapy were aspects of a religious quest, a quest for the

“soul” or psyche. Both proponents and critics of Jung will benefit from Shamdasini’s elegantly written and able framing of a bibliomaniacal life animated by a deep knowledge of, and lived engagement with, myths and symbols from across the history of religions. Whatever one’s attitude toward Jung (my own is quite critical), we students of religion would do well to recall Jung in enacting the *sacrificium intellectus* necessary if the vital “irrational dynamism” of our psyches is not to be eradicated in a desertification of both human imagination and academic scholarship (80).

JEREMY BILES, *School of the Art Institute of Chicago*.

IVEY, PAUL ELI. *Radiance from Halcyon: A Utopian Experiment in Religion and Science*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. 320 pp. \$75.00 (cloth); \$25.00 (paper).

In this well-researched book, Paul Ivey examines the history of the Halcyon colony, a theosophical community established for spiritual fulfillment, physical healing, and social reform near Oceano in San Luis Obispo County, California. As Ivey shows, there were many Theosophical splinter groups in the early twentieth century, though few with this group’s energy and determination. They made persistent efforts to put their beliefs into practice, and for this reason alone, perhaps, they are worth studying. (The mission of the colony, William Dower, a leader in the community, once wrote, “is to bring down the highest spiritual truths to a practical expression in the household, the city and nation, in the field, farm, workshop and schoolroom, where . . . the ideal becomes the practical and the practical, the ideal” [125].) Dower’s proclamation rings with an intensity familiar to scholars of earlier utopian experiments, from Brook Farm to the Oneida community. Like other religious innovators, Dower and his colleagues ignored the skeptics and made unconventional religious convictions the center of a newly imagined lifestyle. The Halcyon colony is in that great tradition.

In several clearly written chapters, Ivey describes the ideas that animated theosophists in general and the Halcyon group in particular. Theosophical emphases on God as an immanent energy meant that God permeated all things, including nature and human nature. As with other metaphysical believers, such as those in Albanese’s *Republic of Mind and Spirit*, Halcyon’s residents wanted to capture the metaphysical energies pulsing at the center of all things. This was done in different ways—in meditative practices that focused the attention, in group rituals that channeled electrical-spiritual waves of power, in electronic healing devices that recalibrated one’s vital forces, and finally in a specially constructed temple (built in 1925) that would attract and focus spiritual forces. Conceiving of God as an energetic spirit also meant that God’s nature was in human nature and therefore all people were kin. At Halcyon, all people embodied this kinship by living and working together in a classless society that practiced the Golden Rule, established equal relations between men and women, and promoted cooperation over competition.

This was the idea, anyway. In reality, as Ivey points out, there were tensions. There were challenges that faced every utopian group—centrifugal forces that pulled brothers and sisters apart and schisms that broke up the body of believers. Even in a religious group formed to create an ecumenical brotherhood, it was hard to prevent conflict and schism.

Ivey’s book was carefully researched and this community is exhaustively described, but Ivey’s provocative thesis is not something he pursues consistently in the book. In his introduction he says his history is an alternative history of innovation in science and the arts, one in which new literary styles and scientific innovations such

as radiotherapy, which we use today to treat cancer, emerged from an idiosyncratic movement. From temple members and their children, Ivey wrote, came inventions that led to radar, microwave technologies, satellite communication, and radiotherapy. This is an interesting and useful argument to advance, and I too have argued elsewhere that scientific pursuits sometimes originate within the context of metaphysical questions or concerns. Ivey argues usefully that a group's beliefs "have truth effects" (10), that this group's innovative community led them to see life in new, imaginative ways. The problem was that only in parts of the final two chapters did Ivey try to demonstrate this.

It was only in the last chapter, for instance, that Ivey discussed how these utopians were innovative scientifically. His argument here is not that the Halcyon colony itself attracted scientists or produced scientific innovation but that three children raised at Halcyon went on to become scientists and develop new technologies. Ivey points in particular to the scientific work of George Harrison (1898–1979), Russell Varian (1898–1959), and Sigurd Varian (1901–61). This trio went to graduate school and developed new spectrographic, microwave, and radar technologies, but it does not necessarily follow that a childhood interest in electricity and spirituality at Halcyon led directly to these technologies. While Ivey's overall point—that this community fostered creative thinking—is plausible, it is not supported in great detail here. Perhaps more focus on how temple members, other theosophists and contemporary scientists argued about the meaning of evolution, electricity, and radiation could have brought into clearer focus how this group's ideas and practices informed and challenged mainstream science.

In any case, Ivey's carefully researched and clearly written *Radiance from Halcyon* calls attention to an important utopian religious group that deserves more attention, a group with a remarkable commitment to new ideas and a determination to embody them in an experimental community. Ivey's utopians developed creative ways of reimagining the divine and reorganizing community life, and their bold ways of mixing scientific technologies and religious conceptions led to new ideas about faith, healing, and positive thinking that have grown in popularity and are particularly prevalent in America today.

CHRISTOPHER WHITE, *Vassar College*.

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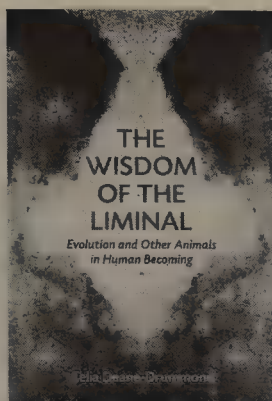
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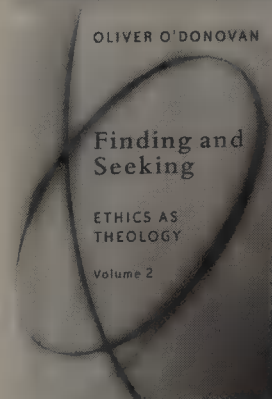


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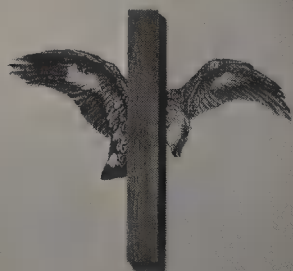
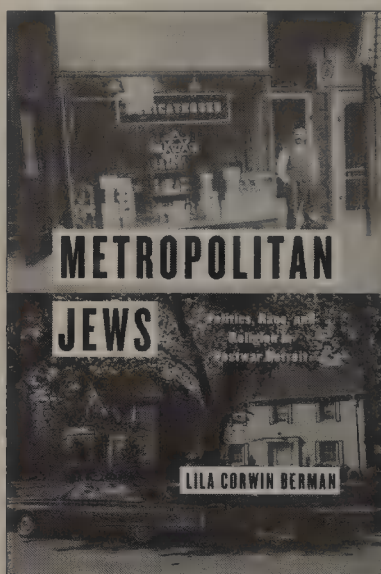
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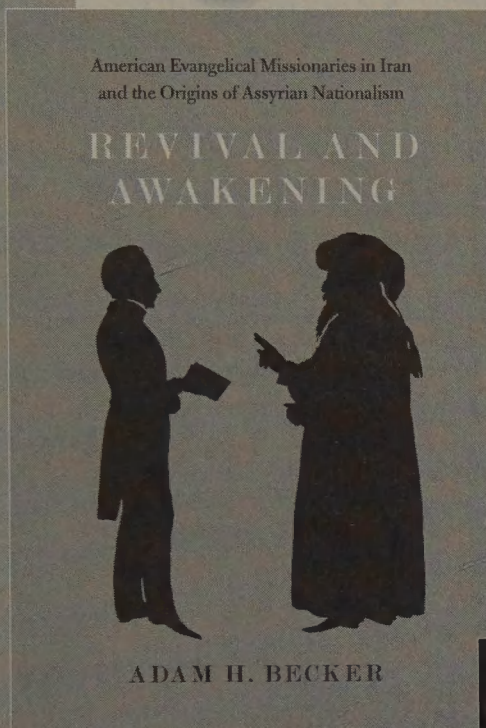


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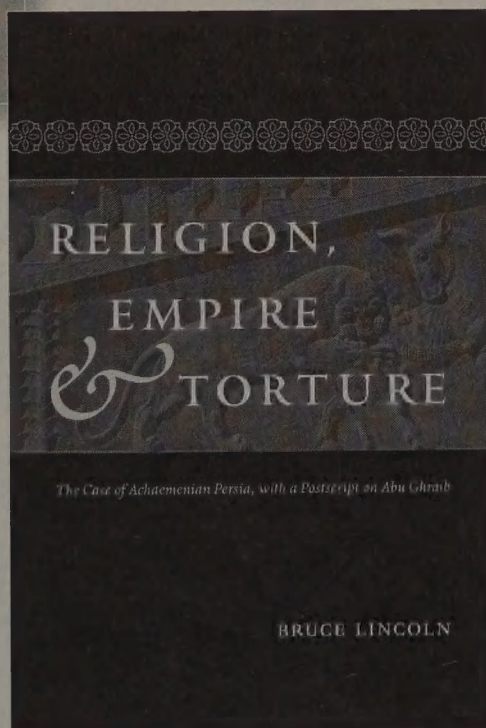
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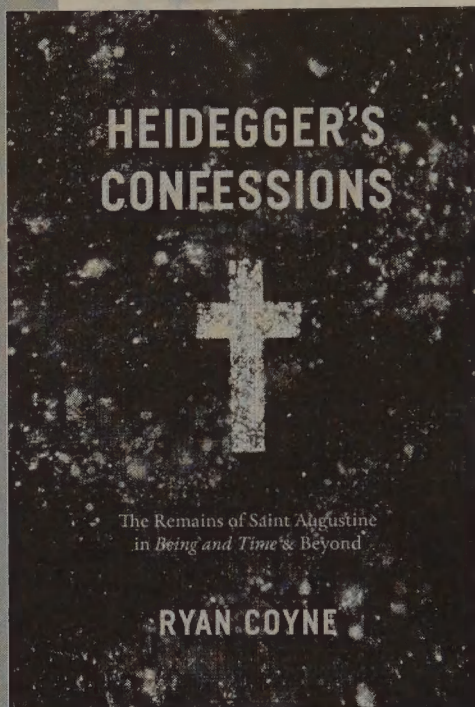


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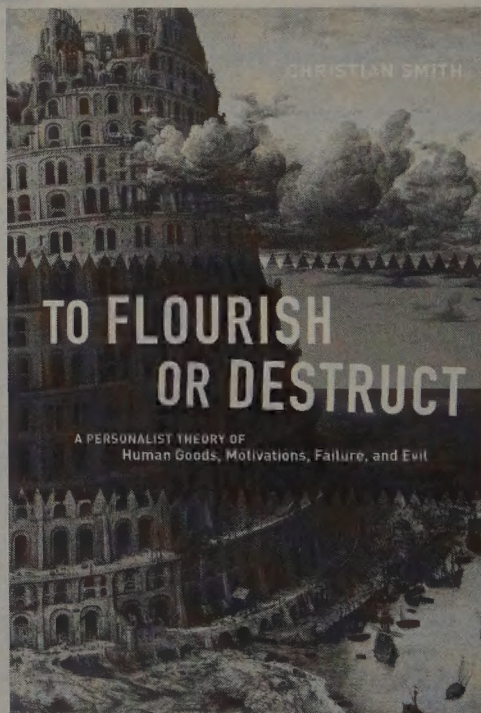
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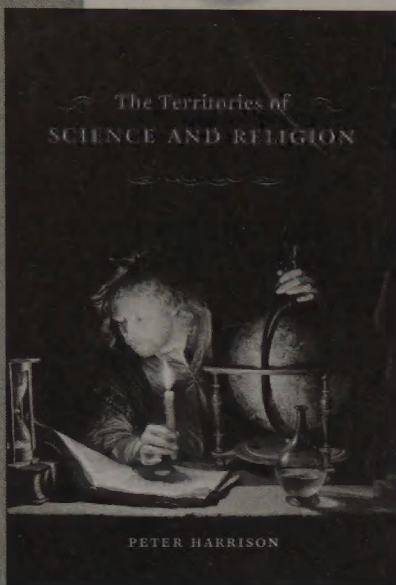


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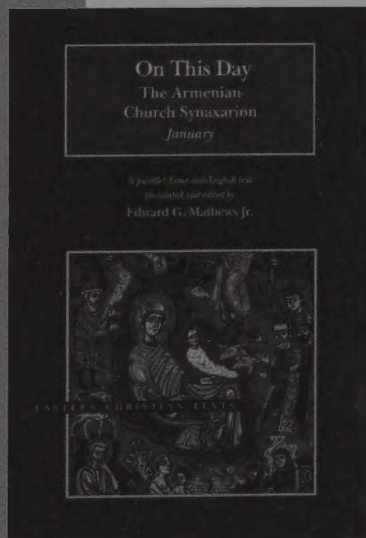
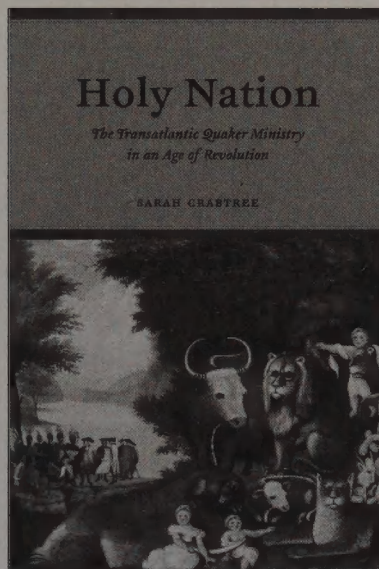
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